



MSHA HANDBOOK SERIES

**U. S. Department of Labor
Mine Safety and Health Administration
Metal and Nonmetal Mine Safety and Health
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**Metal and Nonmetal
General Inspection Procedures Handbook**

This handbook sets forth procedures for conducting inspections of Metal and Nonmetal Mines. Previous editions of this handbook and procedural and administrative instructions addressing this subject are superseded by this handbook. Compliance instructions contained in the MSHA Program Policy Manual are not superseded by this handbook. Changes to this handbook must be authorized by the Administrator for Metal and Nonmetal Mine Safety and Health.

The description of responsibilities that follows set forth the steps that mine inspectors take when conducting mine inspections. When the text describes an action which the inspector “shall” do or specifies steps which the inspector “shall” perform in some sequence, then the inspector is to do so consistent with specific conditions at a mine. Any determination not to conduct such action is to be based on his or her sound discretion and that of his or her supervisor. When the action is one which “should” be followed, then the inspector who does them is engaging in best practices for such inspection and should do them consistent with specific conditions at the mine.

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CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

A. Introduction

Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) inspections and investigations are conducted to assure that a safe and healthy workplace is provided and maintained for miners. Metal and Nonmetal (MNM) mine safety and health inspectors achieve this objective in several ways: (1) by enforcing the provisions of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 (Mine Act) as amended by the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act of 2006 (MINER Act); (2) by conducting safety and health inspections at mines and mills; (3) by issuing citations and orders for violations and imminent dangers; (4) by persuading stakeholders that maintaining a safe and healthy work environment is in their best interest; and (5) by providing information and assistance to the mining industry to aid in reducing and eliminating accidents, injuries, and illnesses in mines or mills.

B. Purpose

This handbook provides procedures for MNM enforcement personnel to follow when conducting inspections of underground and surface mines and mills. The instructions in this handbook supersede previously issued procedural and administrative instructions on this subject. Compliance instructions contained in the MSHA Program Policy Manual (PPM) are not superseded by this handbook.

C. Authority

Section 103(a) of the Mine Act ([see PPM Vol. I Section 103\(a\)](#)) provides Authorized Representatives (AR) of the Secretary of Labor (Secretary) with the authority to conduct inspections and investigations of coal and other mines. Additionally, Section 103(a) provides Authorized Representatives with the right of entry to, upon, and through any coal or other mine. Only persons authorized by the Secretary shall conduct inspections or investigations under the Mine Act.

D. Responsibility

The Administrator for Metal and Nonmetal Mine Safety and Health (Administrator) has overall responsibility for enforcing and implementing provisions of the Mine Act, the MINER Act, and related safety and health regulations at metal and nonmetal mines. Shared responsibility rests with metal and nonmetal mine safety and health inspectors, right of entry personnel, district and assistant district managers, mine safety and health specialists, and field office supervisors.

E. Applicability

This handbook applies to Metal and Nonmetal Authorized Representatives and Right of Entry (ROE) personnel. While ROE personnel have not completed training and are not authorized to conduct inspections, they are “inspectors in training.” In that regard, ROE personnel perform virtually the same enforcement activities as journeyman inspectors while they learn how to properly conduct inspections and/or investigations. Therefore, procedures and guidance in this Handbook apply to AR’s and ROE personnel for that reason. Further, “Inspectors” and “ARs” are terms used interchangeably throughout this Handbook and apply to Authorized Representatives as well as to Right of Entry personnel.

CHAPTER TWO - PROFESSIONALISM, ETHICS, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

A. Inspectors are Safety and Health Professionals

MSHA inspectors must demonstrate through their words and actions that they are ethical, honest, knowledgeable, respectful, credible, and professional. They must be committed to protecting the safety and health of our nation's most precious resource - the miner. Inspectors should always rely on the best available information, in conjunction with their training and experience, to reach fact-based, impartial decisions in safety and health matters involving miners.

B. Ethics

MSHA employees represent the Federal Government and are required to act ethically at all times. MSHA employees are to avoid any action that may be construed as bias or an attempt to influence and should not give either preferential treatment or unwarranted punitive treatment to a mine employee, mine operator, industry labor organization, or industry association. Employees should discuss concerns in this area with their supervisor or an MSHA ethics counselor.

C. Providing Information on MSHA Investigations

Agency personnel will not discuss or provide information to anyone outside of MSHA concerning a matter they know to be under investigation by the Agency. Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the Administrator or his designee. Authorized MSHA personnel, such as special investigators, may advise persons being interviewed for the purpose of an investigation and may acknowledge the existence of an open special investigation.

D. Conducting Efficient and Effective Inspections

As federal employees, MSHA personnel are expected and required to utilize their time efficiently and effectively. To accomplish these goals, inspectors should determine if any portion of a mine inspection or on-site enforcement activity can be conducted differently so that redundant, ineffective, or overlapping activities can be reduced or eliminated without compromising the requirements of the Mine Act or miners' safety and health. Methods which could or should be used by inspectors to attain these goals include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting health sampling simultaneously with safety inspections, if practical or appropriate and in compliance with established MSHA policies and procedures;
- Inspecting tailings dams, dump sites, and similar locations covering a large area by combining driving and walking while assuring that other activities or locations where miners are exposed to potential safety and health risks are not missed or overlooked;
- Writing the majority of general field notes and citation and order documentation on-site during an inspection;
- With supervisory approval, within the confines of DOL and Agency policies, spending an additional amount of time at a mine to complete an inspection so that travel to the mine the next day or week is eliminated; and
- Eliminating or minimizing duplication between general field notes and citation/order note forms.

CHAPTER THREE - HAZARD RECOGNITION AND RISK ASSESSMENT

A. Underlying Safety and Health Hazards

During their on-site activities, MSHA inspectors issue citations and orders of withdrawal (orders) for imminent dangers and violations of mandatory standards, regulations, the Mine Act, and the MINER Act. While the issuance of citations and orders may bring a mine into compliance with safety and health regulations, those actions do not always address underlying causes of violations. To remedy this, inspectors should expand their focus so they can evaluate problems that are not easily seen or gaps in mine safety or health programs that may lead to fatalities or injuries, particularly at mines with excessive injuries, illnesses, or violations. Every serious incident occurring at a mine or mill, whether or not it results in an injury, illness, or death, is one that inspectors can learn from and share with others in the industry. To that end, during every regular inspection inspectors should:

- Discuss safe work practices, accident prevention, risk assessment, and current accident or illness trends at the mine with miners and mine management;
- Analyze the mine's violation history to identify significant trends and determine root causes so this information can be shared and discussed with miners and mine management;
- Focus on potentially hazardous work practices, conditions, or procedures in each work area inspected; and
- Observe and document the general conditions and performance of the ventilation systems when conducting the inspection.

B. Risk Evaluation While Conducting Enforcement Activities

In addition to looking for violations of mandatory standards, regulations or the Mine Act and MINER Act during inspections, inspectors should continually assess workplace conditions, practices, and mine activities for safety and health hazards that may expose miners to risk. Inspectors should take appropriate action to address these risks. Risks identified and steps taken to address them should be documented by inspectors in their notes.

Inspectors should also take every opportunity to discuss risk reduction with miners and mine operators, just as they communicate information regarding violations. Inspectors

should always encourage mine operators and miners to work toward continual improvement in workplace safety and health.

C. Establishing a Culture of Prevention

Despite tremendous improvements in safety and health for miners over the years, the mining environment is an inherently hazardous workplace. Unseen geologic instabilities, constantly changing terrain, and the presence of large and complex mining equipment are a few of the factors that make maintaining a safe and healthy mining workplace challenging. Given this dynamic, inspectors should be supportive of mine operators initiating proactive programs that assist in reducing or eliminating accidents, illnesses, and injuries.

D. Addressing All Safety and Health Concerns

Safety and health concerns brought to an inspector's attention shall be appropriately documented and addressed in accordance with established Agency policies or procedures. Every effort should be made by inspectors to talk with a reasonable number of miners about safety or health concerns they may have during the course of every inspection or investigation. Inspectors should also have ongoing discussions with mine management throughout the course of on-site activities to determine the effectiveness of the mine's safety and health programs. Inspectors should follow procedures in [MSHA's Hazardous Condition Complaint Procedures Handbook](#) if they learn of or are informed of a hazardous condition during these conversations.

CHAPTER FOUR – INSPECTION, INVESTIGATION, AND RELATED PROCEDURES OR ACTIVITIES

A. Assault of MSHA Personnel on Official Duty

Under Section 111 of Title 18 of the U.S. Code it is a federal crime to assault, intimidate, or impede MSHA employees assigned to perform investigative, inspection, law enforcement, or other official duties ([see PPM Vol. I 103-1 Assaulting, Intimidating or Impeding Inspectors](#)). Thus, any person who assaults, intimidates, or impedes an MSHA inspector while the inspector is engaged in the performance of his or her official duties, is subject to investigation and arrest by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, prosecution by the United States Attorney, and to a fine and/or imprisonment. Inspectors should be familiar with actions that are to be taken when confronted with these types of situations as outlined in MSHA's Program Policy Manual. Inspectors should leave the mine and promptly notify their supervisor when they believe they may be subject to physical harm or assault.

B. Litigation and/or Requests for MSHA Documents or Testimony

Requests from outside MSHA involving litigation, inspection documents, or subpoenas should be forwarded in writing to the appropriate district office. District management may wish to discuss these requests with the appropriate Office of the Solicitor. Decisions on how to respond to such requests are usually made by the Office of the Solicitor in consultation with the Administrator or appropriate District Manager.

C. Appearance in Formal Hearings, Legal Proceedings, or Trials

MSHA personnel are frequently required to provide formal statements or testify in legal proceedings regarding their inspection or investigation activities. The following guidance applies in those situations.

- **Preparing to Testify**

If the inspector's anticipated testimony concerns Agency inspection or investigation documents, he or she should be familiar with the material and be able to refer to the records easily and readily. Inspectors should refresh their memory by reviewing applicable Agency documents prior to their testimony. The inspector's testimony must be what he or she recalls from the event, not what someone else remembers. Therefore, inspectors should not talk to others in trying to recall details unless he or she has first discussed this matter with the Office of the Solicitor.

- **Attendance at Trials, Legal Proceedings, or Formal Hearings**

Inspectors should dress in a manner showing respect for the court when attending trials, legal proceedings, or formal hearings. They also should not engage in behavior or conduct that will bring disfavor or reflect poorly on the Agency or themselves.

- **Testifying**

When asked a question, inspectors should talk to members of the jury, if there is one, or to the person (e.g., judge) asking the question. Inspectors should speak clearly and loud enough so persons farthest away can hear easily and should ask for questions to be repeated, if necessary. Inspectors should never answer a question they do not fully understand and should only answer the question that was asked. They should inform their Office of the Solicitor's attorney in private if they realize they made an incorrect statement in earlier testimony.

Inspector's conclusions or opinions should not be volunteered unless they are requested. Whenever possible, objective answers should be given to questions that are asked. When presenting facts, inspectors should refrain from saying "I think," or "I believe." Inspectors should acknowledge that they do not know an answer to a question instead of volunteering an answer they hope is correct.

Inspectors should stop speaking when a judge or attorney interrupts their testimony and should wait to be instructed by the judge or attorney to resume their testimony. Inspectors should be polite even if others are not behaving in a similar manner.

D. Attempts to Influence MSHA Enforcement Efforts

Inspectors shall inform their supervisor as soon as possible regarding all offers of money, materials, future employment, or similar behavior or actions by any mine operator, labor organization, or miner intending to influence an inspection or investigation.

E. Disputes between Miners and Mine Management

MSHA inspectors shall not cross established picket lines at mine/mill sites unless directed to do so by their supervisor. Inspectors shall maintain their impartiality at all times towards miners, labor organizations, and management when dealing with these entities. Inspectors shall not get involved with nor take positions when differences of opinion exist between mine labor and mine management on issues unrelated to safety and health.

F. Required Mine Inspection or Investigation Supplies and Equipment

Inspectors should be prepared to inspect mines and mills at all times during normal work hours. In that regard, they should always have the equipment and supplies necessary to conduct inspections or accident investigations. Depending on the types of mines or mills in their field office's area of responsibility, items such as, but not limited to; safety harnesses, underground cap lamps, life vests, and self-rescuers may not be immediately available because they may be shared among several inspectors.

Excluding the sometimes shared equipment noted above, inspectors should have the following inspection equipment or supplies:

- hard hat, safety-toed boots, safety glasses with side shields, and gloves;
- appropriate specialized equipment or clothing, such as disposable coveralls, hoods, boots, etc., (for field offices with mines/mills having harmful chemicals or similar contaminants), foul weather gear (for offices with extreme mining conditions), or other items for protection from the contaminant/condition by the district office;
- hearing protection;
- reflective coveralls or vests with appropriate reflective tape on hard hat (for field offices with underground mines);
- fit-tested respirator with appropriate filters;
- safety harness and lanyard;
- lamp belt with metal identification tag attached and extra identification tag for check-in and check-out purposes (for field offices with underground mines);
- self-rescuer (for field offices with underground mines);
- electric cap lamp and charger (for field offices with underground mines);
- gas testing kit;
- anemometer, stopwatch;
- measuring tape and ruler (wood and/or metal);
- camera with extra batteries;
- laptop computer;
- health sampling equipment;
- Title 30, Code of Federal Regulations (may be on laptop computer);
- Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977, as amended (30 U.S.C. § 801 et seq.), MINER Act of 2006, appropriate Agency handbooks, policies, procedure letters and bulletins (may be on laptop computer);
- business cards;
- citation, order, and continuation forms (hard copy forms);
- inspection forms, review form cover sheets, general field notes, citation and order notes, accident investigation forms, area or equipment closure tags; and
- current safety and health materials for distribution or discussion.

G. Contaminated Inspector Clothing or Equipment

In some cases, mine operators require inspectors and other visitors to wear company-provided clothing or equipment during on-site activities; in other cases, MSHA provides inspectors with these items when they inspect sites requiring specialized protection from processes, materials, or the environment. Regardless of who furnishes these items, inspectors should comply with company use policies and procedures to minimize or eliminate contact with hazardous or toxic materials. Inspectors should contact their supervisor for further guidance if company policies or procedures regarding this clothing interfere with or impede their inspection or investigation activities, or if the PPE is insufficient to protect the inspector.

Inspectors should, if possible, leave company-supplied clothing or equipment contaminated with hazardous or toxic materials with the operator for appropriate disposal. If disposal in this manner is not possible, inspectors should contact their supervisor or district industrial hygienist for guidance on properly packaging, transporting, and disposing the contaminated items.

H. Government Leased or Owned Vehicles

The Department of Labor's (DOL) Administrative Procedures Manual (DLMS 2 - Administration), MSHA's Administrative Policy and Procedures Manual (APPM) (Volume II, Chapter 500) and General Services Administration (GSA) regulations and procedures require that government property, such as government-owned or leased vehicles, be used only for official activities. Employees shall follow these procedures and regulations when operating a government-owned or leased vehicle. Additional information on this subject can be found on MSHA's intranet or on the DOL or GSA internet sites.

Federal Management Regulations provide that no person on Federal property may possess firearms, explosives, or other dangerous or deadly weapons, either openly or concealed except as specifically authorized (see FMR § 102-74.435, FMR § 102-74.440). MSHA employees are prohibited from possessing firearms or other dangerous weapons while in Federal facilities. These provisions also apply to motor vehicles used for official business which are construed as government property. Therefore, firearms or other weapons or explosives are not to be transported in government owned or leased vehicles at any time.

As noted in MSHA's APPM (Volume II, Chapter 500 and Volume IV, Chapter 400), Agency employees operating Government owned or leased vehicles are required to:

- Not place the vehicle into motion unless the seat belts of all occupants are properly fastened;
- Maintain a valid state, District of Columbia, or territorial driver's license for the type of vehicle to be driven;
- Complete MSHA Form 1000-133 to report deficient safety equipment with their assigned vehicle when the deficiency is the result of noncompliance with a specification or other requirement;
- Assure that the assigned vehicle and government supplied equipment is secured at all times to prevent theft; and
- Complete [Form DL 1-2018, Daily Motor Vehicle Trip Log](#), every time a government-owned or leased vehicle is used.

I. Self-Rescuer Use, Care, Inspection, Maintenance, and Training

As noted in MSHA's Administrative Policy and Procedures Manual (see APPM Volume IV, Chapter 400), inspectors who regularly enter underground mines shall be proficient in the use, care, maintenance, and inspection requirements of each type of self-rescue device they are assigned to use, as well as other types of self-rescue devices provided by MSHA. Accordingly, inspectors who regularly enter underground mines should be trained on appropriate self-rescue devices every six (6) months. Training dates should be recorded and maintained by the field office supervisor.

Personnel who do not go underground regularly do not have to receive self-rescuer training every six (6) months. However, if more than six (6) months has elapsed since an inspector received training in the device they are assigned to use, the individual should be provided training on the appropriate device prior to entering an underground mine.

J. Use of Cameras

Cameras should be used whenever practical to obtain digital images to document violations, accident scenes, or other conditions during an inspection or investigation, subject to the following restrictions:

1. Only cameras approved as permissible for use in return air by MSHA's Approval and Certification Center (A&CC) shall be used or carried into areas where permissible equipment is required, unless otherwise approved by the District Manager.
2. Cameras are prohibited within 25 feet of explosives, other than Ammonium Nitrate Fuel Oil (ANFO), including storage magazines, loaded explosives vehicles, and explosives loading areas.

3. Cameras are prohibited in areas where flammable materials are stored or used and in areas of coal handling that are Class I or Class II Hazardous Locations (explosive dusts or gases) as outlined in National Fire Protection Association® NFPA 70®, National Electrical Code®.
4. In all underground gassy metal and nonmetal mines, tests for methane will be conducted by inspectors prior to using any camera. If methane is present at or exceeding one percent (1%), only cameras approved for use in gassy mines by MSHA's Approval and Certification Center shall be used.
5. The use of cameras is prohibited in all gilsonite mines.

Digital photographs must clearly and accurately depict the nature of the violation or condition. Where appropriate, photographs of abatement or termination measures should also be taken. Before photographs are taken, ensure that the camera is set to the correct date and time. If the camera has audio capability, it should be turned off so that voices are not recorded, unless all persons are explicitly notified that their statements are being recorded.

To be most effective, a violation or condition should be captured with both an "up close" shot and a distance shot, and with a scale to provide perspective and points of view. The photograph should depict a miner's potential for exposure to the hazard or violation of the standard. As a rule of thumb, no more than two or three good photographs are necessary to illustrate a violation and its resolution. Too many photographs can become an administrative burden.

When taking a video recording, begin at a distance and "zoom in" to provide greater detail of particular features. When panning an area, move the camera slowly enough to permit viewers to observe relevant details and attempt to minimize unintended camera movement. Additionally, digital memory cards may be needed to ensure sufficient storage capacity if both videos and photographs are taken.

At no time should MSHA personnel put themselves or others at risk or ask miners to reenact practices to obtain photographs. MSHA personnel should not photograph conditions that pose an imminent danger before taking actions necessary to prevent miners from being exposed to the hazard.

Even when printed photographs are produced, the digital images should be stored on a CD or DVD, and the CD or DVD must be maintained in the mine inspection/investigation file or as part of the inspection report. When transferring the digital images and the associated information to support enforcement action, use

MSHA Form 4000-125. A copy of completed 4000-125 forms shall be attached to the affected citation or order.

Documentation Required: If persons other than inspectors are taking photographs during an inspection or investigation, inspectors should record in their notes the name and affiliation of those persons. All images captured by inspectors during an inspection or investigation must be retained in the mine inspection/investigation file or as part of the inspection report. Images from digital photographs should be saved to a CD or DVD in the same file format (normally JPEG with moderate compression) and at the same resolution as they were originally captured by the camera and must be maintained in the mine inspection/investigation file or as a part of the inspection report. The inspection/ investigation notes or the Photo Mounting Worksheet (MSHA Form 4000-125) should document: (a) the person who took the photograph when more than one inspector/investigator was involved in the inspection/investigation; (b) the date and time the photograph was taken; (c) the location of the condition or object; (d) a brief description of image(s) captured; and (e) the person who transferred the digital image to the CD or DVD and to the Photo Mounting Worksheet. Original digital images should not be modified or edited. All enforcement actions, inspector notes, and digital images associated with an inspection or an investigation should be provided to the Office of the Solicitor or a Conference and Litigation Representative (CLR) once a matter has been referred to the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission or any other judicial body. Once the digital images are effectively and reliably stored on a CD or DVD, the images may be deleted from the camera's digital memory card.

Photographs taken during enforcement activities not deemed relevant or not mounted on this form should be included with the applicable report or properly identified and stored on appropriate recording medium. These procedures may be altered by the Administrator or District Manager as appropriate.

K. Use of Testing, Measuring, or Similar Devices or Equipment

Inspectors may utilize a variety of specialized devices or equipment to measure distance, weight, angle, voltage, etc., during their on-site activities. Some of these devices include, but are not limited to:

- Tape measures;
- Electric voltage or amperage detectors (e.g., Tic-Tracers™, volt-ohm meters);
- Abney levels; and
- Electrical circuit testers (e.g., wood-heads, Tic-Tracers™).

District managers have the authority to determine the specialized equipment their inspectors should be issued and utilize during on-site activities. Inspectors should

receive appropriate training before using such devices to prevent exposing themselves or others to potential hazards. As appropriate, devices should be calibrated to assure accurate readings prior to being used for enforcement purposes. Further, use of electrical or battery-powered devices in certain mines, including mills (e.g., gassy mines, gilsonite mines/mills) may be prohibited or contingent on potential hazards. If electronic or mechanical devices (excluding tape measures or rulers) are used to reinforce or supplement facts contained in citations or orders, inspectors should document whether these devices were calibrated as required by the manufacturer or in accordance with MSHA's requirements prior to their use.

L. Rotation of Assigned Inspection Travel Areas

Inspection travel areas assigned to inspectors shall be rotated annually so that they can, over time, gain a broad understanding of the mines within their field office's area of responsibility. Inspectors should not have inspection responsibilities for the same mine (this includes mills) for more than one year. Exceptions to rotation of travel areas or mine inspection assignments exceeding one year shall be approved by the Assistant District Manager.

M. Assignment of Former Employees to Work At or Inspect a Mine/Mill

At least two years must elapse from the last date of employment at a mine or mill until MSHA personnel may conduct Agency-related work at such operation. Further questions on this subject should be directed to the appropriate district office.

N. Weekly Itinerary Completion

Inspectors should complete and submit a Weekly Itinerary Form (MSHA Form 4000-126) each week they do not have work duties in the field office unless directed otherwise by their supervisor.

O. Communications between Inspectors When Travel Areas Change

As a result of new travel area assignments, inspectors previously assigned to a mine or mill should brief the newly assigned inspector before the new inspector's first regular inspection of the mine. Generally, this briefing occurs at the start of each fiscal year. During that briefing, the following information about mines or mills in the applicable travel area should be communicated:

- Major construction projects;
- Special mining conditions;
- Health or safety concerns;

- Ongoing or long-term compliance problems and/or violation history;
- Pending litigation;
- Granted or pending petitions for modification;
- Actions taken by the former inspector to address negative injury, illness, or enforcement trends;
- Any other significant information regarding safety and health issues.

P. Advance Notice of Mine Inspections

103(a) Advance Notice

[Section 103\(a\) of the Act](#) prohibits giving advance notice of inspections to be conducted by an authorized representative of the Secretary of Labor. Any information relating to inspection and investigation schedules, including an inspector's mine assignments, shall be restricted solely to MSHA personnel who have need of such knowledge. ([See PPM Vol. I 103\(a\) Advance Notice](#) and [PIB10-15](#))

An implied exception to this prohibition against advance notice exists in Section 103(g)(1) of the Mine Act where a representative of the miners or a miner gives notice to MSHA of what he or she believes to be an imminent danger. In these cases, the mine operator or his/her agent must be notified "forthwith." Such notification will almost always have the effect of indirectly giving notice of an inspection.

The Mine Act does not prohibit advance notice of investigative activities (activities which are not direct enforcement activities). However, notice of investigative activities (e.g., 105(c) and 110(c) investigations) shall only be given when there is a need for such notice. Approval must be obtained from an inspector's supervisor before notice can be given for investigative activities. Other activities where advance notice is not prohibited may include:

- Obtaining information for health and safety research;
- Technical assistance, including field certifications;
- Obtaining information for petitions for modifications, etc.;
- Criminal investigations;
- Education and training;
- Investigation of miner discrimination complaints;
- Accident investigations;
- Preparation for health sampling activities during an ongoing inspection;
- Demonstrations of research or prototype equipment; and
- Investigation of certain hazard complaints.

Approval should be obtained from the inspector's supervisor before notice is given of an activity which allows for preparations essential to completing that activity.

Examples of on-site activities requiring advance notice to mine operators and/or miners' representatives are described below:

- If an inspector intends to inspect the second work shift or conduct personal health sampling during his or her on-site activities, it may be necessary to designate a time and meeting place so that representatives of the operator and miners can be given an opportunity to accompany the inspector. Pre-selected meeting sites should not reveal the specific areas to be inspected or sampled. However, it is recognized that the normal progression of an inspection may reveal remaining areas to be inspected.
- When preparations are needed during an inspection for an examination of a mine's power system, the inspector may make arrangements for the inspection of the electrical system during scheduled down time.
- If it is necessary to interrupt an on-site inspection for any cause, the inspector may inform the operator and, if applicable, the miners' representative, that the inspection is interrupted and will be resumed at the discretion of the inspector.

An observer could allege that an inspector is providing advance notice if he or she arrives at a mine site, notifies officials that an inspection is starting, conducts a pre-inspection conference, then leaves the site without conducting a physical inspection of any portion of the mine or mill. To avoid this appearance, inspections should be scheduled so that a portion of the mine/mill is physically inspected on the first day an inspector arrives at the site. Prior approval by the inspector's supervisor is required if a physical inspection of some portion of the mine or mill cannot be accomplished on the first day of any inspection.

Example: Inspector Jones arrives at the mine early one afternoon to conduct a regular inspection. Jones conducts an opening conference with the mine operator and miners' representative and then inspects the mine shop in its entirety before leaving the site for the day. In this case, Inspector Jones did not provide advance notice of this inspection because he inspected a portion of the mining operation before leaving the mine the first day. On the other hand, if Inspector Jones left the site on the first day of the inspection without inspecting any portion of the mine or mill, it might appear to some that the inspector was giving advance notice that the mine would be inspected the following day.

The Mine Act prohibits advance notice of MSHA inspection activities. When an inspector learns that an operator, contractor, or any other person has given advance notice of an impending inspection, the inspector should issue a citation under Section 104(a) of the Mine Act, alleging a violation of Section 103(a) of the Act.

Advance notice includes subtle forms of communication (such as coded references, like “company is here,” or “visitors are on-site”) intended to disguise communications announcing MSHA’s presence at a mine. Communications warning of inspection pending activity after a multi-day inspection has begun also constitute advance notice. All persons need to be aware of their legal obligations, and an individual or an operator may violate the Mine Act’s advance notice provisions even if not warned explicitly against providing advance notice. Inspectors are to complete and submit a special assessment review form for all advance notice citations.

Advance notice has an inherent tendency to interfere with an inspection. Thus, an inspector need not demonstrate that mine conditions or practices were altered based on advance notice to establish an advance notice violation. However, the physical conditions of a mine may indicate that mine personnel received advance notice and acted to conceal violations. For example, new ventilation curtains installed where there are indications that no mining had occurred after the curtains were hung are conditions that may indicate advance notice occurred. Enforcement personnel should document these conditions thoroughly when a citation for advance notice is issued.

In addition, inspectors are to immediately notify their supervisor following the issuance of a citation for a violation of Section 103(a) for giving advance notice. The supervisor is to inform the District Manager of the issuance. District Managers, in consultation with the Technical Compliance and Investigation Office (TCIO) and the Office of the Solicitor, as appropriate, will evaluate each advance notice violation to determine whether the circumstances and evidence warrant an investigation under Section 110(e) and/or injunctive action under Section 108(a)(1) of the Mine Act.

When preparing to conduct an inspection, MSHA enforcement personnel should take precautions not to disclose their intentions to conduct an inspection in a specific location. Examples of such precautions include reviewing examination books for several areas of the mine, rather than only the specific area that they intend to inspect that day, and making a general request for transportation, rather than requesting transportation to travel to a specific location.

Q. Denial of Entry

Authorized Representatives of the Secretary of Labor have the right of entry to, upon or through any mine for the purpose of making any inspection or investigation under the provisions of the Mine Act ([see PPM Vol. I Section 103\(a\) Denial of Entry](#)). In the event an inspector is refused entry to a mine, or is threatened or harassed while making an inspection, the inspector should promptly notify his/her immediate supervisor and give the supervisor all the available information. The supervisor shall also alert his/her manager of any circumstances that have the potential to place an inspector in harm’s

way. In addition, the inspector should be familiar with the terms, definitions and actions to be taken as outlined in [MSHA's PPM, Volume I](#), and in [MSHA's Citation and Order Writing Handbook](#).

103(a) Denials of Entry

Any authorized representative of the Secretary shall have the right of entry to, upon or through any mine for the purpose of making any inspection or investigation under the provisions of the Act. In the event an inspector is refused entry to a mine, or is threatened or harassed while making an inspection, the inspector must be familiar with the terms, definitions and actions to be taken, as described below.

Denials of entry can be either: (a) direct denials involving confrontation; or (b) indirect denials involving interference, delay and/or harassment.

Upon being denied right of entry, the inspector should first attempt to determine the type of denial.

Was it direct or indirect? Specific actions must be taken for the different types of denials:

1. **Direct:** Direct denials are those in which an operator or the operator's agent informs an inspector that an inspection of the mine will not be permitted. The inspector should document the operator's response as to why the operator is denying entry; believing that the mine is not subject to the Act, or a search warrant is required, or denies entry to a specific inspector.

The following situations are the most common reasons for direct denial: (1) the operator refuses to permit inspection based on the belief either that MSHA does not have the right or authority to inspect because the mine is not subject to the Act, or that a search warrant is required; (2) the operator chooses to be selective by denying entry to a specific inspector. The latter is to be considered a denial of entry to MSHA as a whole.

The following actions should be taken if the inspector can safely do so:

- a. The inspector should explain to the operator the mandatory inspection requirements in [Section 103\(a\)](#) of the Act and that denying entry will result in a citation being issued with a penalty assessed for the denial of entry violation.
- b. If, after explaining MSHA's position to the operator, the inspector is still denied entry to the mine, the inspector shall issue a 104(a)

citation citing a violation of [Section 103\(a\)](#) of the Act and establishing a reasonable time for abatement. Suggested abatement time is 30 minutes unless circumstances necessitate other limits.

- c. After a citation is issued, once the operator withdraws the denial and permits the inspection, the inspector should terminate the citation.
 - d. If the operator continues to deny entry to the mine after the termination due time and date have passed, the inspector should issue an order of withdrawal (define the area affected by the order as "no area affected") and notify the immediate MSHA supervisor so that an injunctive action may be considered.
2. ***Indirect:*** Indirect denials are those in which an operator or his agent does not directly refuse right of entry, but takes roundabout action to prevent inspection of the mine by interference, delays, or harassment. There must be a clear indication of intent and proof of indirectly denying entry. For example, access to the mine is blocked by a locked gate or other means of blockage. However, a locked gate or other means of blockage, in and of itself, does not necessarily constitute a denial of entry. Mine management may have only closed the mine for the day and blocked the mine access road to prevent vandalism. However, when a locked gate is accompanied by continued production and deliberate avoidance of communication with the inspector, the mine operator is denying MSHA right of entry to the mine property. Other examples are listed below. The list is not meant to be all-inclusive, and reference is made only to some of the situations which may constitute an indirect denial.
- a. Refusal to furnish available transportation on mine property when it is difficult or impossible to inspect on foot;
 - b. Refusal to provide information regarding, or to accompany inspectors into, areas considered unsafe to travel without specific knowledge of the subject mine (e.g., knowledge of on-shift blasting schedules in metal mines);
 - c. Withdrawing mine personnel when the inspector arrives;
 - d. Removing power from the mine or the mine ventilation system when an inspector arrives (before or after production);
 - e. Denying access to equipment or the immediate work area;

- f. Deliberately withholding vital information (ownership, responsible person, name of operator, disposition of product, ownership of equipment, etc.); and
- g. Denying entry for failure to have a search warrant. The Supreme Court, in the case of *Donovan v. Dewey*, 452 U.S. 594 (1981), upheld the authority of MSHA to conduct warrantless inspections.

When the mine has an I.D. number and the operator is known and present and does not verbally refuse right of entry, but takes indirect action to prevent inspection of the mine, the inspector should explain the particular actions which are considered to be a denial of entry, and then should proceed in accordance with the above instructions pertaining to [Section 103\(a\) of the Act](#), Denials of Entry.

When a mine has an I.D. number and the operator is known but not present, and access to the mine is indirectly denied, the inspector should return to the office, notify his/her immediate supervisor, issue a 104(a) citation for a violation of [Section 103\(a\)](#), and mail the citation to the operator by certified mail, return receipt requested. The inspector shall return to the mine site at the conclusion of the abatement period and terminate the citation if an inspection is allowed. If entry is still denied, the inspector shall issue a 104(b) order of withdrawal and notify the MSHA supervisor of the action taken so that injunctive action may be considered.

When a mine does not have an I.D. number and the operator is unknown, and access to the mine is indirectly denied, the inspector should return to the office, notify the supervisor, and assist in identifying the mine property and property owner in order to determine jurisdiction. When the property is identified and jurisdiction has been established, the inspector and the supervisor should meet with the operator or agent and request access.

The operator or the agent must be informed that he or she has been identified as the operator, owner, lessee, etc., and that MSHA has evidence that the operation is under the jurisdiction of the Act. The operator must be given a description of the circumstances which prevented access. The inspector should then explain the statutory right of entry and again attempt to gain entry to the mine property. Should a denial of entry again occur, the inspector and the supervisor should take appropriate action depending upon the nature of the denial, as previously discussed.

R. Section 108 – Injunctive Relief Procedures

An injunction is an order from a court demanding that a person do something (e.g., allow entry) or refrain from doing something (e.g., working against an order of

withdrawal). The failure or refusal to comply with any type of injunction can be punishable by a contempt-of-court charge. Inspectors should notify their supervisor when the mine operator or the mine operator's representative:

1. Violates, fails, or refuses to comply with any order or decision issued under the Mine Act;
2. Interferes with, hinders, or delays the inspector in performing any of his or her official duties;
3. Denies entry onto mine property;
4. Refuses to permit inspection of the mine by the inspector or investigation of an accident or occupational disease occurring on mine property;
5. Refuses to provide information or reports requested for the purpose of carrying out provisions of the Mine Act; or
6. Refuses to permit access to or copying of records requested for the purpose of carrying out provisions of the Mine Act.

When any of these circumstances arises and cannot be remedied by communication with the operator, discuss it with your supervisor immediately to determine if injunctive action may be appropriate. Additionally, if one of the above situations is encountered, record the names of as many persons involved as possible, the date and time of the denial or observance, and a detailed account of the circumstances. Then contact your supervisor as soon as possible. The supervisor and the District Manager will contact the Regional Solicitor's Office to determine the merits of the case, the sufficiency of the evidence, and whether injunctive relief is advisable or possible. ([Refer to Section 108 in Volume I of the PPM for further guidance.](#))

S. Jurisdictional Issues

Questions regarding MSHA's jurisdiction are among the most common situations encountered during an inspector's on-site activities. MSHA and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), for example, have a formal Interagency Agreement to address areas of mutual responsibility and resolve many of these issues. However, even with this agreement and agreements with other entities, situations involving MSHA's jurisdiction regularly occur. These situations are almost always complicated and, as such, normally decided on a case-by-case basis. ([See PPM Vol. I Section 4 Mines Subject to the Act](#))

Determinations regarding jurisdiction rely on information initially supplied by inspectors. Inspectors should be aware, and be appropriately cautious, that jurisdictional issues may require the participation of several other agencies including

the Office of the Solicitor or OSHA. As a result, an extended period of time may pass before these issues are resolved. Areas where these types of issues occur include, but are not limited to:

- Indian Reservations;
- US Forest Service property;
- US Park Service property;
- Navigable waterways or rivers,
- Co-located MSHA and OSHA facilities (maintenance or repair shops, power generation plants, etc.);
- Railroad equipment, track beds, personnel, or tracks;
- Mine exploration and/or development on abandoned mine sites;
- Reclamation activities at closed or non-operating mines or mills;
- Mine sites with co-located energy generation facilities;
- Public roads to and/or from a mine or mill;
- Borrow pits.

Four areas where most jurisdictional issues occur are:

- **Borrow Pits**

A “borrow pit” is an area of land where the overburden, consisting of unconsolidated rock, glacial debris, or other earth material overlying bedrock is extracted from the surface. Extraction occurs on a one-time basis or intermittently as need occurs, for use as fill materials by the extracting party in the form in which it is extracted. No milling is involved, except for the use of a scalping screen to remove large rocks, wood and trash. The material is used by the extracting party more for its bulk than its intrinsic qualities on land which is relatively near the borrow pit. Thus, if earth is being extracted from a pit and is used as fill material in basically the same form as it is extracted, the operation is considered to be a "borrow pit" subject to OSHA jurisdiction except those borrow pits located on mine property or related to mining.

- Example: Any borrow pit located on mine property that is operating for the purpose of building a road or constructing a facility on the site is subject to MSHA jurisdiction.
- Example: A landowner uses a front-end loader to load bank run material into over-the-road trucks to fill potholes in roads, low places in yards, etc. No milling or processing is involved, except for the use of a scalping screen to remove large rocks, wood, and trash from the material before it was loaded onto various trucks for removal from the site. This operation is a borrow pit subject to OSHA jurisdiction.

- **Mine Roads**

As many jurisdictional issues involve mine roads, the District Manager and Office of the Solicitor should be consulted before a field determination is reached regarding MSHA's jurisdiction over mine roads.

- **MSHA/OSHA Interagency Agreement**

MSHA and OSHA entered into an interagency agreement in 1979 that delineated certain areas of inspection responsibility, provided a procedure for determining general jurisdictional questions, and provided coordination between the two agencies in areas of mutual interest. MSHA exerts jurisdiction over operations whose purpose is to extract or to produce a mineral, but does not have jurisdiction where a mineral is extracted incidental to the primary purpose of the activity. MSHA will not have authority at sites where a mineral may be processed and disposed of when that operation is **not** functioning for the primary purpose of producing a mineral.

The MSHA/OSHA Interagency Agreement ([MSHA/OSHA Agreement](#)) is available on MSHA's web site and in each district office. All inspectors should be familiar with it as most jurisdictional issues involve that agreement. Enforcement personnel should also refer to MSHA's [PPM \(Volume I, Section 4\)](#) or their supervisor for assistance if questions on jurisdiction occur.

- **Railroad Facilities or Equipment on Mine/Mill Sites**

MSHA and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) entered into a [Memorandum of Agreement \(MOA\) in 2015](#) that provided for improved interagency communication and delineated respective areas of inspection responsibility with regard to railroad facilities and equipment. Inspectors should be familiar with the MOA and verify that MSHA has jurisdiction over railroad equipment, track beds, locomotives, etc., prior to initiating inspections of that equipment or those facilities. Questions regarding jurisdiction over railroad equipment, track beds, locomotives, etc., should be referred to the Division of Safety and Health Chief for resolution.

If operation and maintenance of railroad cars, locomotives, and track-mounted and stationary car-moving equipment owned, leased or operated by a railroad carrier and performed by employees or contractors of the railroad carrier presents an imminent danger to miners, a Section 107(a) imminent danger withdrawal order with no underlying violation should be issued to the mine operator. The order should require that miners be removed from and/or prohibited from entering the area or using the equipment until the unsafe conditions or equipment is corrected.

T. Complying with Rules or Procedures Established by the Mine Operator

Inspectors should make every effort to comply with state, county, or local government and company safety and health requirements or procedures when conducting mine inspections or investigations except when the requirements conflict with federal standards or interfere with or impede the performance of the inspector's duties. Inspectors should also be ready to and provide MSHA identification (AR or ROE card) when requested by the mine operator.

U. Mine Operator Sign-In Log or Release from Liability Form

MSHA inspectors shall not sign release from liability forms when entering a mine on official duties. However, if requested, inspectors should sign a check-in and check-out book, form, or log located at the guard shack, mine or mill provided that it does not include a release from liability statement. ([See PPM Vol. I Section I.103-2 Company Release Forms](#))

V. Performing Work or Operating Equipment or Machinery at Mines/Mills

Inspectors shall not assist or direct mine employees or officials in work activities at the mine site unless directed to do so by their supervisor. Inspectors shall not operate mine equipment or machinery unless directed to do so by their supervisor. ([See PPM Vol 1 Section I.103-3 Performance of Work Other Than Inspections and Investigations](#)).

W. Limiting or Minimizing Vehicular Travel While On Inspections of Mine Sites

MSHA inspectors, when appropriate and/or possible, should conduct inspections or investigations on foot in all areas of a surface or underground mine or mill. Inspectors may periodically or briefly operate a government vehicle or ride in other vehicles to travel from one location to another while conducting inspections at a site. These trips should be kept to a minimum and only undertaken when they are necessary to conduct an efficient and effective inspection. Inspectors must be alert for hazardous conditions or work activities while riding in or driving a vehicle and make appropriate stops to ensure that safety and health hazards are not present.

Example: Inspector Jones is inspecting a large surface mine and mill that has many miles of haulage roads. For efficiency purposes, Jones inspects the roads and berms while traveling in a mine company pickup accompanied by the mine operator's agent and a miners' representative. This is an acceptable reason to utilize vehicles while conducting an inspection.

Example: Inspector Jones is inspecting an underground mine which has a portal entrance. As travel into and out of the mine by miners and mine management is done

in pickups, Inspector Jones also decides to ride into and out of the mine in the same manner. This is not an acceptable reason to utilize a vehicle during a mine inspection. During the trip into and out of the mine, Inspector Jones could not adequately observe ground and other conditions due to his limited vision from the pickup and its speed of travel. In this case, Inspector Jones should have either walked into or out of the mine so that ground conditions that could expose miners to hazards could have been adequately observed, noted, and, if necessary, appropriately acted upon.

X. Submission Times for Inspection Reports

Inspection reports should be completed and submitted not later than the beginning of the work week following the conclusion of the inspection unless extenuating circumstances are present. All notes, photographs, and other documents compiled or obtained during the inspection shall be included with the report. Appropriate forms, for the activity conducted, shall be completed as appropriate and included with the report. Inspectors should obtain approval from their supervisor when there are circumstances that delay submission of the completed report beyond the time required above.

Ship all health samples by expedited mail services as soon as possible to the MSHA analytical laboratory, to ensure the laboratory receives the samples within 10 days of collection (except for some samples that have much shorter holding times, e.g. gas). Health sampling reports, including appropriate and completed forms, should be submitted by inspectors not later than the beginning of the work week following receipt of the lab analysis unless prior approval is given by their supervisor.

Y. Issuing Citations and Orders

Citations and orders of withdrawal shall be written and issued as soon as practical after violations are observed, but no later than the next business day. A best practice is for inspectors to issue citations and orders of withdrawal at mine sites. In most cases, inspectors should issue orders of withdrawal the day they are observed. Exceptions to this guidance should be discussed with the inspector's supervisor; other exceptions can be found in [MSHA's Citation and Order Writing Handbook](#).

Each violation, and its evaluation, shall be discussed with the mine operator and miners' representative at the time it is observed by an inspector. Inspectors should promptly inform the operator and miners' representative and make appropriate modifications, if additional information affecting the initial evaluation of a citation or order is later obtained or learned during the inspection.

Section 103(j) and 103(k) Orders

The term “accident” is defined in Section 3(k) of the Mine Act. Generally, the District Manager or District Accident Investigation Coordinator will determine which accidents will be investigated. On learning of an accident, unless MSHA is already present, enforcement personnel (AR) should verbally issue a Section 103(j) order to the operator, including initial instructions, as soon as possible. The order, including any instructions, should then be reduced to writing and transmitted to the operator as soon as practicable. The order, should also require the operator to prevent the destruction of evidence at the accident site. In the event that a mine accident is not a mine emergency (i.e., there are no ongoing rescue and recovery efforts), MSHA may issue a 103(j) order prohibiting activity at the accident site to prevent the destruction of evidence which would assist in investigating the cause or causes of the accident.

On MSHA’s arrival on-site and following assessment of conditions, MSHA (AR) may modify the Section 103(j) order, including all instructions, to reflect that MSHA is now proceeding under the authority of Section 103(k) of the Mine Act. MSHA should inform parties on-site that any activities that are rescue or recovery related will be permitted through subsequent modifications of the Section 103(k) order. The Section 103(k) order is intended to protect all persons involved in the emergency operation or accident investigation. As such, all parties on-site are subject to the Section 103(k) order and any subsequent modifications. Each proposed action should be reviewed by the designated MSHA person onsite before the Section 103(k) order is modified and before the action is commenced. MSHA has the authority to issue a Section 103(k) order unilaterally. However, every effort should be made to gain consensus among the parties involved to obtain the safest and most effective outcome. ([Refer to 103\(j\) Sample Language for further guidance.](#))

In the event of a mine accident where rescue and recovery work is necessary, [Section 103\(j\) of the Act](#) grants the inspector broad authority to take whatever action, including the issuance of orders, that the representative deems appropriate to protect the life of any person. Where appropriate, the inspector may supervise and direct the rescue and recovery activity.

Immediately on arrival at the mine accident scene, or later as mine rescue operations develop, the inspector may determine that direct control is necessary, either entirely or partially, particularly in situations where a less hazardous rescue procedure is desirable. Because of this broad authority, discretion and good judgment on the part of the inspector are imperative.

Under [Section 103\(k\) of the Act](#), the inspector can issue any such order as deemed appropriate to ensure the safety of any person, including a Section 107(a) order if an imminent danger is found. Again, it is important to emphasize that the inspector must

exercise discretion and good judgment when issuing a 103(k) order. The following instructions are provided to assist in exercising this discretion:

1. The Section 103(k) order is issued to ensure the safety of any person at the mine, and should apply to relevant areas of the mine to accomplish this result. In some cases, the order will only apply to the accident site itself.

In some accidents for example (a fire, explosion, or inundation), the extent of the hazard may not immediately be known, and the order may apply to the entire mine until the extent of the hazard is clarified. The inspector may subsequently modify the order to exclude areas of the mine where safety of persons is not affected.

2. The Section 103(k) order should remain in effect until a systematic evaluation of the conditions and safety practices is conducted, and MSHA reasonably determines that hazards similar to those that caused or contributed to the accident have been eliminated. The evaluation can be made prior to the accident investigation or concurrent with it. After this evaluation and determination have been made, the Section 103(k) order may be modified to permit an area of the mine to resume operations, or terminated if appropriate, provided that such action will not pose a hazard to the miners.
3. In addition, Section 103(k) requires the operator to obtain the inspector's approval of any plan to recover any person in a mine, to recover the mine, or to return affected areas of the mine to normal.

Notwithstanding the instructions above, during rescue and recovery work, when it is determined by the inspector that an order is appropriate to protect the life of any person, or that supervision and direction of rescue and recovery activities is appropriate, a Section 103(j) order shall be issued to the operator. When possible, the inspector should contact the District Manager or Assistant District Manager prior to issuing a Section 103(j) order.

An inspector, when present at the mine following an accident, may immediately determine that rescue and recovery work is necessary. In such a situation, the Section 103(k) order issued under this section will generally be appropriate. Section 103(k) orders are not to be terminated without approval of the District Manager or his or her designee. (See [PPM Vol. I, Section 104\(a\) Citations and Orders](#) [Refer to Accident/Illness Investigation Procedures Handbook for further guidance.](#))

Z. Citation Termination Times

Inspectors shall give primary consideration to the health and safety of miners in establishing violation abatement times. The termination time and date for a citation must be specific, taking into account the degree of hazard to the miner(s), and provide a reasonable time for the operator to abate the violative condition or practice. Guidance can be found in MSHA's Citation and Order Writing Handbook.

AA. Submission Times for Special Assessment and Possible Knowing and Willful Violation Review Forms

Certain types of violations or orders are required to be reviewed for special assessment or as possible knowing and willful violations. Review forms for these types of violations should be completed by inspectors and submitted in a packet with other required documentation to the district office not more than five work days after issuance of the violation.

CHAPTER FIVE – REGULAR INSPECTION PROCEDURES

103(a) Mandated Inspections, Section 103(a) of the Act

[Section 103\(a\)](#) of the Act requires a minimum of four inspections a year for underground mines and a minimum of two inspections a year for surface mines. MSHA's interpretation is that this requirement applies to full-time producing mines operating for the entire fiscal year period. For mines which started operating in the middle of the fiscal year, fewer inspections are required. MSHA's policy for these mines is based on an average of one inspection every quarter for underground mines and an average of one inspection every six months for surface operations. Underground mines in an inspectable status for 45 days or more in a quarter require an inspection, and surface operations in an inspectable status for 90 days or more in a six month period require an inspection.

For intermittent surface mines, MSHA's policy requires one inspection a year.

If a mine has received an Attempted Inspection event during the inspection period, no inspection is required for that period. This does not apply to any mine in “active” status, unless the mine is a surface portable mine.

If the status of a mine changes to abandoned, abandoned sealed, or temporarily idle before the end of the inspection period and remains in one of those statuses, no inspection is required. Inspection requirements for previous inspection periods remain in effect.

Regular mine safety and health inspections consist of three general phases: activities done by inspectors prior to arriving at the mine, the physical inspection of the mine, and activities conducted after the inspection is completed. The physical inspection of the mine includes inspecting the mine or mill site, including in-service mining equipment, and observation of mining and work cycles. The inspection also includes discussions with appropriate miners and mine management regarding safety and health topics and completion of required documentation.

A. Activities Prior to Conducting Regular Inspections

Activities to be conducted prior to starting a regular inspection of a mine or mill include assembling appropriate documentation, gathering and, if necessary, calibrating certain inspection equipment, and reviewing mine file data. Documentation that an appropriate review was conducted shall be included in an inspector's notes or on the appropriate MSHA form for all enforcement inspections. The off-site documentation review for regular inspections includes, but is not limited to:

- Regular mine inspection reports for the previous year;
- Outstanding citations or orders;
- Determining whether the mine is on the 104(d) “chain,” on a pattern of violations under section 104(e), or whether flagrant violations have been issued;
- Health sampling data or goals required by the Strategic Plan of the Department of Labor;
- Miner training plans required by 30 CFR Part 46 (if available at the field office) or Part 48;
- Mine ventilation plans (as required by 30 CFR § [57.8520](#)) and mine maps (both of these are for underground mines, if available);
- Escape and evacuation plans including mine rescue arrangements (for underground mines, if available);
- Legal identity forms;
- Injury, illness, accident, and employment reports submitted to MSHA since the last regular inspection;
- The mine’s injury and illness incidence rate;
- Determining whether petitions for modification are in effect or have been applied for;
- Whether notifications of mine opening or closing are on file; and
- Other pertinent safety and health issues (e.g., use or storage of hazardous or toxic materials, use or storage of explosives)
- Review and print copies of the following to deliver to and review with the mine operator and miners’ representative during the pre-inspection or close-out conference:
 - Relevant sections of the mine profile report
 - POV monitoring tool
 - S&S rate calculator
 - RTLB calculator

B. Arrival at the Mine Site

Upon arrival at the property, inspectors shall notify representatives of the miners and the mine operator of their intent to conduct an inspection. The extended unavailability of a miners’ or operators’ representative, or other similar situation, should not delay the start of any inspection. Individuals with conflicting claims regarding their status as miners’ representatives should reconcile those differences among themselves.

Inspectors may accept anyone designated by the mine operator as the operator's agent. The size of the inspection party may be controlled by the MSHA inspector to assure an efficient and effective inspection.

C. Miners' Representatives

Miners' representatives wishing to exercise their rights to accompany the inspector during the inspection should meet the notification requirements in 30 CFR Part 40. If there is no designated representative of miners, or if the miners' representative cannot be determined, inspectors shall discuss safety and health matters at the mine with a reasonable number of miners at various places in the mine during the course of the inspection.

[Section 103\(f\)](#) of the Mine Act requires that representatives of the operator and miners be permitted to accompany inspectors in order to assist in conducting a full inspection. A representative of the operator and a representative authorized by miners shall be given an opportunity to accompany inspectors during the physical inspection of any coal or other mine, including areas where only contractors are working, for the purpose of aiding such inspection and participating in pre- or post-inspection conferences held at the mine. Where there is no authorized miners' representative, inspectors shall consult with a reasonable number of miners concerning matters of health and safety in such mine. (See Representation of Miners Designation Form 2000-238 and [PPM Vol. I Section 103\(f\) Rights of Participation in Inspection Activity](#)). In addition to providing the representative of the miners with the right to accompany the inspector, Congress guaranteed that the representative would suffer no loss of pay for the time during which the representative exercises this right.

Inspection activities that give rise to participation rights under Section 103(f) are numerous but not unlimited. Section 103(f) contemplates activities where inspectors are present for the purpose of physically observing or monitoring safety and health conditions as part of a direct enforcement activity. These types of activities include but are not limited to:

- Regular inspections;
- Compliance follow-up inspections;
- Hazardous condition complaint inspections;
- Accident investigations; and
- Inspections at especially hazardous mines (e.g., mines liberating excessive amounts of explosive gases).

One inspector conducting an enforcement activity as noted above may allow more than one representative to accompany him or her; however, only one representative is entitled to suffer no loss of pay for that particular accompaniment. However, when there is more than one inspector at a mine on an enforcement activity and miners' representatives are accompanying each inspector in different areas of the mine, each representative should be paid by the operator for that accompaniment.

While not mandated by the Mine Act, as a matter of courtesy inspectors should notify designated miners' representatives of their arrival during any other on-site activities that do not involve direct enforcement activities.

D. Pre-Inspection (Opening) Conference

Once notification of the regular inspection has been given, the highest ranking mine official and the designated representative of the miners will be given an opportunity to participate in a brief pre-inspection conference to discuss issues relative to the upcoming inspection and other safety and health issues pertinent to the mine. Concerns, questions, or issues raised during the meeting should be discussed and documented at this time. A separate conference can be held if either party chooses not to meet as one group. Independent contractors on-site may be included in this conference if appropriate. The pre-inspection conference should be appropriately documented by the inspector.

E. Varying Regular Inspection Starting Points and Inspection Routes

Inspectors are strongly encouraged to vary their inspection routes and starting points at mine or mill sites from one regular inspection to another to prevent predictability and more accurately assess safety and health conditions. Inspectors should also vary their inspection frequency as to the time of or the month of the year a mine is inspected.

Example: In October 2007, MSHA Inspector Jones started a regular inspection of the Smith Mine and Mill by beginning his inspection in the open pit. In May 2008, Inspector Jones begins the second regular inspection of the fiscal year of the Smith Mine and Mill by starting the inspection in the mill.

F. Inspection of Mines, Mills, Equipment, and Machinery

One of the best times for inspectors to get an accurate picture of conditions and work practices at a mine or mill is immediately after arriving at the site. Therefore, inspectors should begin inspecting active mining areas as soon as possible after arriving at the site and concluding their pre-inspection conference. When assembled, the inspection party should immediately travel to active work areas of the mine or mill. Inspectors should look at the following areas, equipment, documentation and any other safety and health issues that the inspector believes are necessary during the inspection:

- the active mine, mill, shops, ventilation systems, pump houses, electrical transmission facilities and/or substations, flammable and combustible storage areas, fixed equipment, and a representative number of the operating mobile equipment on the mine site, etc.;

- each active mining cycle;
- all explosives magazines and storage facilities;
- active haulage and service roads, dumps, stockpiles, warehouses, leaching ponds, impoundments (e.g., retaining dams), pipelines, storage tanks, offices, etc.;
- work practices and procedures;
- all work shifts, including non-production (excluding security personnel only shifts) and maintenance shifts; and
- all required documentation (e.g., employment, injuries, illnesses, miner training, HazCom records, hoist personnel physicals).

G. Inspection of All Mining Cycles

Inspectors shall make every effort to observe each phase of all mining cycles during every regular inspection of a mine or mill. The term "mining cycle" includes, but is not limited to: activities such as drilling, blasting, mucking, timbering, scaling, and the transfer and/or haulage of ore or waste. If a phase of the mining cycle, such as blasting, only occurs once in the mine during the course of an inspector's inspection, the inspector will take appropriate steps to observe and note the conditions, procedures, and practices associated with those blasting activities.

Inspectors may not be able to observe each phase of the mining cycle at every working place during a particular inspection. Given this, inspectors must evaluate sufficient conditions and practices and ask enough questions to be reasonably assured that work is being safely conducted for the activities that could not be observed. Mining cycles not observed during an inspection shall be documented in the inspector's general field notes along with any specific observations and conversations regarding observed mining cycles.

H. Inspections of All Work Shifts

Inspectors should inspect on all work shifts of a mine (which includes mills) during every regular inspection. Inspectors are not required to inspect a second or third (e.g., night, graveyard) work shift where the only employees at the site are security staff. If an inspection is not conducted of a non-work shift, inspectors should assure that mining, maintenance, or similar activities are not occurring and that personnel at the site during these times are not exposed to potential risk.

I. Inspection of Barricaded or Abandoned Areas

- **Barricaded areas**

MSHA regulations at [30 CFR §§ 56/57.2](#) defines barricaded areas to mean "obstructed to prevent the passage of persons, vehicles, or flying materials."

Barricaded areas can be found at surface and underground mines. The following procedures apply when inspectors encounter barricaded areas:

- Information should be obtained from miners and the mine operator to determine why barricades are in place, how long they have been in place, and what (if any) hazard they prevent miners from accessing.
- Applicable mine maps, workplace examination records, and other documents should be reviewed to acquire additional knowledge about these areas.
- The areas should be reviewed to determine if they must meet the signage and/or barricade requirements found in [30 CFR Parts 56/57.20011](#).
- Areas with obvious safety or health hazards should not be inspected unless prior approval of the inspector's supervisor is obtained.

- **Abandoned areas**

The definition of "abandoned workings" is found at 30 [CFR § 57.2](#) and is applicable only to underground mines and surface areas of underground mines. These areas are defined as "deserted mine areas in which further work is not intended." The following procedures apply when inspectors encounter abandoned workings at underground mines and surface areas of underground mines:

- Information should be gathered from miners and the mine operator regarding the reasons for the abandonment, how long the area has been abandoned, whether mining will be conducted in the area in the future, and what (if any) hazards may be or are present.
- Applicable mine maps and other documents should be reviewed to learn more about the area in question.
- A determination should be made if these areas meet the signage and/or barricade requirements found in [30 CFR §§ 56/57.20011](#).
- Areas with obvious safety or health hazards should not be inspected unless prior approval of the inspector's supervisor is obtained.

Facts leading to an inspector's determination that an area is legitimately barricaded or abandoned and should not or cannot be inspected should be noted in his or her general field notes. Also, discussions with miners and mine management concerning these areas should be documented by inspectors including the name(s) of the person(s) with whom the inspector discussed the area.

Appropriate enforcement action will be taken for indirect denial of entry if inspectors determine that a mine operator abandoned or barricaded an area solely to deny inspectors entry to inspect an area. Inspectors may wish to discuss this matter with their supervisor prior to taking enforcement action. Inspection of barricaded or abandoned areas during an inspection shall be documented in the inspector's general field notes or why they were not inspected, with any specific observations and conversations regarding Barricaded or Abandoned Areas.

J. Inspection of Mines or Mills Not Operating at Full Capacity or Not Operating

At times, inspectors attempt to conduct regular inspections of mines or mills and find, on arrival, that it is not operating or not operating at full capacity and some equipment or machinery is not in operation. In these cases, regardless of whether the mill or mine is operating or only operating with limited capacity, inspectors shall conduct a regular inspection.

Example: Inspector Jones arrives at ABC mine to conduct a regular inspection. He learns that the mine has not operated for two weeks due to limited demand. All miners on-site are performing maintenance, housekeeping, or similar activities. Nonetheless, Inspector Jones conducts a regular inspection and determines: whether miners have been task trained for the task they are performing; whether equipment or machinery being repaired has been properly locked and tagged out, blocked against motion, etc.; whether miners are wearing appropriate personal protective equipment, etc. Inspector Jones also reviews all required documentation (e.g., miner training records, workplace examinations, equipment pre-shift inspections). Further, he conducts an inspection of the non-producing or non-active section of the mine or mill to assure that potential hazards or risks to miners do not exist. The inspector documents in his notes that the mine or mill is non-active or non-producing.

K. Inspection of Explosives Magazines and Storage Facilities

MSHA conducts inspections of explosive storage magazines, and facilities in conjunction with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) at all mines subject to MSHA jurisdiction as a result of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Under the MOU, if inspectors observe violations of ATF safety and security standards found in 27 CFR Part 555, Subpart K, Storage, they will report these to the ATF. MSHA standards govern the movement and use of explosive materials taken underground for mining and similar activities.

Inspectors must check for compliance with MSHA standards and should also identify and inform the mine operator of any violation(s) of ATF standards regarding the construction and maintenance of magazines and underground storage facilities. Inspectors are required to complete ATF form [ATF 5030.5](#) for all observed ATF violations. The completed form must be sent to the ATF by email to MSHA@ATF.gov within 10 days of inspection completion and a copy given to the mine operator.

Explosives in an underground mine are to be stored in a facility that complies with appropriate MSHA and ATF standards or in an appropriately constructed storage facility, such as required by 30 CFR [§§ 57.6160 and 57.6161](#). Pursuant to 30 CFR [§§ 56/57.2](#), a storage facility is defined, in part, as a structure “...used to store explosive materials. A storage facility used to store blasting agents corresponds to a BATF Type 4 or 5 storage facility.”

MSHA’s standards regarding the construction of explosives magazines are in [30 CFR §§ 56/57. 6132](#); standards addressing underground storage facilities are at [30 CFR §§ 57.6160 and 57.6161](#).

When violations of MSHA standards cannot be abated during an inspection, inspectors should enter the abatement due date in the space provided on the ATF form. The abatement due date shall match the MSHA citation due date. If there are violations or a situation involving explosive materials that could affect miners or the public’s safety, the following guidance applies:

- If explosives are stored in a way that creates a hazardous condition and the condition cannot be corrected immediately, the mine operator should be given a reasonable period of time to comply, dependent on the hazard and circumstances present at the time. Inspectors should use their best judgment in determining this abatement time and consider all factors (e.g., potentially dangerous combination of explosive materials, possibility of accidental detonation, possibility of theft, etc.), with danger to the miners being the prime consideration for establishing this termination time.
- It may be necessary to require a mine operator to remove explosive materials immediately if an extreme danger exists. Unabated violations involving improperly stored explosives that may endanger miners shall be immediately referred to the appropriate MSHA District Manager. The District Manager should, in turn, review the situation and determine whether to have a local inspector address it or whether an ATF regional office should be contacted.

Finally, the inspector’s supervisor shall be notified immediately if it is determined that explosive materials may not be properly accounted for or are missing due to suspected

theft or misuse. In these cases, if appropriate, inspectors should take immediate action to assure the safety and health of miners until direction or guidance from their supervisor is received.

L. Inspections of Second Escapeways, Underground Hoisting Facilities, and Refuge Chambers

Metal and Nonmetal mine operators are required to develop and maintain second escapeways from certain underground mines, (a second escapeway is recommended, but not required, during exploration or development of an ore body). Fires, ignitions, inundations, ground falls, gas outbursts, and other catastrophic underground events have, in the past, led to deadly entrapments of miners. The longer a second escapeway is not functional or available, the greater the risk miners face from hazards that may block or impede their safe passage through regular travel routes to the surface.

- **Second Escapeways**

The mandatory standards at [30 CFR § 57.11050\(a\) and \(b\)](#) provide for one of the most fundamental protections available to underground miners – that at least two functional escapeways be provided to the surface once mine production begins. However, as noted in Volume IV of MSHA’s Program Policy Manual:

A second escapeway is recommended, but not required, during the exploration or development of an ore body. In this application, “exploration or development of an ore body” should be used in its narrowest sense i.e., while an ore body is being initially developed, or development or exploration work is being conducted as an extension of a currently producing mine. Where mining occurs along a mineralized zone and production and development are indistinguishable as separate activities, the standard must be applied as it would to a producing mine.

In situations other than exploration or development, a violation of [30 CFR § 57.11050\(a\)/\(b\)](#) exists and a citation shall be issued whenever fewer than two functional escapeways out of a mine are available to miners working underground. This applies even if the mine operator has started correcting the condition that caused the second escapeway to be nonfunctional. Other than those miners necessary to conduct maintenance or repairs, miners must be removed from the mine within a reasonable time if a disruption of service prevents the miners from having two or more functional escapeways.

A violation of [30 CFR § 57.11050\(a\)/\(b\)](#) does not occur if, upon having fewer than two functional escapeways, the mine operator immediately initiates a continuous

withdrawal of miners to the surface. Such a withdrawal may be terminated if at least two escapeways become functional during the withdrawal.

No violation of [30 CFR § 57.11050\(a\)/\(b\)](#) occurs when a second escapeway is out of service because of maintenance or repairs, or other interruption of service, **and** the removal from service does not affect the functional ability of the escapeway to enable miners to reach the surface in an emergency. For example, an interruption of service that would not usually affect the functioning of the escapeway would include the lubricating of hoist ropes, adjustment of hoist gates, replacement of bolts on the shaft guides, or the inspection of shafts, adits, or conveyances. In the above example, if the functioning of the escapeway would not be impaired or affected in any way, i.e., if the work being performed or the inspection of the escapeway can be immediately terminated and the miners can resume using the escapeway, the escapeway is considered to be properly maintained.

A violation of [30 CFR § 57.11050\(a\)/\(b\)](#) does not occur if a second escapeway is out of service because it is necessary to use the escapeway to lower mining equipment into, or retrieve mining equipment from, the mine and only those miners facilitating the lowering or retrieving of mining equipment remain underground. At some mines, certain mining equipment can be lowered or retrieved only through a second escapeway. If the second escapeway is out of service because it is used to lower or retrieve mining equipment, the escapeway is considered to be properly maintained, and there would be no violation, if only those miners working to lower or retrieve mining equipment remain underground. As in the situation of miners working underground to perform maintenance or repair on the escapeway itself, the escapeway can be rapidly returned to service and only a few miners are stationed underground.

In setting an abatement time for violations described above, inspectors should, at a minimum, consider the following factors:

- potential hazard or hazards to miners;
- the time required to safely evacuate all but the necessary maintenance personnel from the mine;
- the type of self-rescue devices available;
- the time required to notify all miners underground of the unavailability of an escapeway including instructions for use of the remaining escapeway in the case of an emergency;
- the likelihood of a fire, explosion, or other similar event; and
- the time required to return the affected escapeway to operation.

The violation is abated when at least two escapeways are again fully functional or miners are no longer underground.

Inspectors should confirm that the primary and secondary escapeways from an underground mine are properly designated on a mine's escape and evacuation plan required by [30 CFR § 57.11053](#). The plan, or appropriate portions of it, is required to be posted at all underground shaft stations, shops, lunch rooms, and wherever miners congregate. Inspectors should review this plan during every regular inspection to verify that it is current, accurate, and posted at the required locations. Inspectors should also confirm that the primary and secondary escape routes are regularly inspected by the mine operator or his representative and marked as required by [30 CFR § 57.11051](#). Inspectors are responsible for traveling all designated escapeways during every regular inspection to verify that they are passable and can effectively function in a mine emergency.

(See PIB09-09 Re-Issue P07-04 - Clarification of Requirements of Title 30 Code of Federal Regulations §57.11050 Escapeways and refuges)

- **Hoisting Facilities**

Many mines transport personnel to and from underground areas with hoists. Hoists are also used to convey mine supplies and equipment into the mine and remove damaged equipment, waste materials and ore. In most cases, hoists also serve as the primary or secondary escapeway out of the mine. Usually the best time to inspect these facilities is when the facilities are idled for routine maintenance or during a non-production work shift. Examination of hoists and related facilities or items includes but is not limited to:

- shaft(s);
- wire ropes;
- conveyance attachments;
- conveyance(s);
- hoist house;
- signaling and communication systems;
- emergency evacuation procedures (e.g., frequency, method); and
- hoist operator (yearly physical examination).

- **Methods of Refuge (Refuge Areas or Chambers) and Inspection**

Under [30 CFR § 57.11050\(b\)](#), a method of refuge must be provided when an underground miner, using the normal travel means, cannot reach the surface within one hour from at least two separate escapeways. These areas are commonly called refuge areas or chambers. Miners working in a mine which is not provided with two separate escapeways through which they can escape within one hour must be

provided with a refuge area or chamber they can access within thirty minutes of their work place using the normal means of travel.

Inspectors should be aware that thirty minutes travel time from a miner's work place to a refuge area or chamber may take significantly longer in an emergency situation as opposed to travel time in a non-emergency situation. Inspectors should verify travel times from various miners' work areas to refuge areas or chambers during regular inspections and inform mine operators and miners' representatives when this time limit is being approached. Travel time(s) between selected work areas and refuge areas or chambers and discussion(s) conducted with all mine personnel regarding this issue should be documented in an inspector's notes.

Refuge areas or chambers are required to be noted on the mine's escape and evacuation plan required by [30 CFR § 57.11053](#). Refuge chambers or areas must also meet the requirements of [30 CFR § 57.11052](#).

(See PIB09-09 Re-Issue P07-04 - Clarification of Requirements of Title 30 Code of Federal Regulations §57.11050 Escapeways and refuges)

M. Inspection of Mobile Equipment Parked on Ready Lines

Many mines have areas where mobile or similar equipment is parked and ready for immediate use. These areas are commonly referred to as "ready lines." Inspectors must inspect equipment for safety defects which is parked at ready lines or similar areas unless such equipment is tagged or marked out of service. The tag should list the defect(s) and prohibit further use until the defect(s) is corrected.

Out of service equipment can also be located in a designated area posted for that purpose. Equipment tagged or marked out of service in these areas should not be inspected. Some mobile equipment cannot be moved to a designated area as described above due to defects making it incapable of such a move. Inspectors should not inspect equipment like this if it is tagged or marked out of service and the defect is noted. However, if no tag or marking exists, it should be inspected **if it is safe to conduct such inspection**.

N. Inspection of Impoundments/Retaining Dams

Impoundments/retaining dams serve a variety of purposes at mines, including water storage, flood and sediment control, and waste disposal. Hazards can be created if the impoundment/retaining dam is not constructed or operated to safely store the contents. Water from processing mills or rainfall runoff can be stored for later use or to prevent flooding of mine facilities. Solid waste is created during the process of mining and

milling ore or aggregate and can be classified by size as either coarse or fine. Coarse waste consists of sand-sized and larger particles. Fine waste, sometimes referred to as tailings or fines, consists of particles smaller than sand. Coarse and fine waste can be separated at the mill or pumped to the disposal site as slurry where it can be separated. Slurry is a mixture of solid waste and typically water. After separation, the coarse waste can be used as the construction material for embankments and the fine waste is stored within the impoundment.

Inspectors should inspect all impoundments/retaining dams during every regular inspection. In addition to inspecting the impoundment for deficiencies, the area downstream should be examined to confirm the hazard potential classification for a retaining dam has not changed. Documentation of these inspections should be on an MSHA Form 4000-127a which should be included with the inspection report. The 4000-127a checklist form contains specific guidance on what to look for when inspecting an impoundment/retaining dam. Inspectors should also verify that a completed and updated Tailings & Water Impoundment Inspection Form (MSHA Form 4000-127) is on file with the district retaining dam safety representative. This Form will be used by the District's Retaining Dam Safety Representative to update the National Retaining Dam Database.

(See PIL I13-IV-01 Procedures for Documenting Inspections of Dams on Initial and Subsequent Regular Inspections)

(See PIL I14-IV-01 Procedures for Informing State Agencies When Dams are No Longer Subject to MSHA Jurisdiction.)

O. Mine Rescue Teams and Equipment

All underground mines are required to have mine rescue teams and store appropriate equipment for their use. Mines are also required to maintain this equipment and provide regular training to rescue teams. [30 CFR Part 49](#) (Mine Rescue Teams) establishes minimum requirements for mine rescue teams in the following areas: team size and availability; rescue equipment, storage and maintenance; rescue notification plans; and team member experience, health and training. Inspectors shall inspect rescue team equipment, equipment storage areas, maintenance of equipment, and applicable records for equipment maintenance and team training during every regular inspection. Inspectors should also discuss the adequacy and frequency of training, if possible, with randomly selected team members.

These regulations also provide for alternative mine rescue capability for mines which are "small and remote" or those having "special mining conditions." Inspectors should

refer to [30 CFR Part 49 in Volume III of MSHA's Program Policy Manual](#) for more information. Inspectors will review the alternative plan approved by the District Manager if a mine has been designated as "small and remote" or has "special mining conditions" as defined in 30 CFR Part 49. Inspectors should confirm that required conditions in the district manager's approved plan are in place or in use at the mine.

P. Inspections of Electrical Equipment, Transformer Stations, and/or Electrical Circuits

Metal and Nonmetal inspectors inspect a wide variety of equipment and machinery during their enforcement activities. In some cases, they may encounter equipment or machinery that, while they may have received some training for inspecting it, they may not be totally qualified or adequately trained to safely inspect it. Such equipment or machinery may include, but is not limited to: certain electrical equipment or machinery, transformer stations, transformer enclosures, and major electrical circuit panels.

Unless inspectors are qualified by experience or education, have the appropriate testing equipment, and are equipped with appropriate protective clothing, inspections of electrical circuits, boxes, transformer stations, etc., other than a visual external inspection, should not be conducted. Further, MSHA inspectors should never open energized electrical boxes, transformer enclosures, or similar enclosures.

If hazards or violations of mandatory standards appear to exist in electrical equipment or machinery, an electrician selected by the mine operator should be the individual to open electrical boxes, enclosures, or to conduct appropriate functionality or safety tests. Prior to this activity occurring, inspectors should determine if it will put the electrician or the inspection party in harm's way. Opening boxes, testing circuits, or other similar activities should not be done if it is determined that unacceptable risk exists. If an electrician is not available and hazards or violations of mandatory standards appear to exist in electrical equipment or machinery, inspectors should contact their supervisor to arrange for a qualified MSHA employee to inspect the equipment or machinery.

Q. Training or Retraining of Miners (30 CFR Part 46 and Part 48)

All underground and surface hard-rock mines are required to submit and obtain MSHA approval for [30 CFR Part 48 \(Training and Retraining\)](#) training plans. Aggregate and crushed stone surface mines and mills are required to develop, without MSHA pre-approval, a [30 CFR Part 46 \(Training and Retraining\)](#) training plan for their miners. Title 30 CFR Part 46 and Part 48 requires that some training must be provided to new miners before they begin working at a mine, experienced miners who are rehired or hired at a mine, or miners that are transferred to a new work location or are given new work tasks or assignments. Finally, all miners are required to receive annual refresher

training. Inspectors should refer to [Volume III of MSHA's PPM](#) for further information on this subject.

R. Hazard Communication (30 CFR Part 47)

MSHA's Hazard Communication (HazCom) standards at 30 CFR Part 47 require mine operators to: evaluate the hazards of chemicals they produce or use and provide information to miners concerning chemical hazards by means of a written hazard communication program; labeling containers of hazardous chemicals; providing access to material safety data sheets (MSDS); and initial miner training. HazCom is based on two safety and health principles: miners have a right to know about the chemicals hazards where they work and mine operators have the responsibility to be aware of chemical hazards at their mine. More information on HazCom can be found on MSHA's website. During every regular inspection, inspectors should determine whether:

- a written HazCom program has been developed;
- appropriate miner training in HazCom has been conducted;
- miners have been notified of chemical hazards at the mine;
- appropriate MSDS sheets have been obtained;
- appropriate MSDS sheets are available to miners; and
- applicable labeling of chemicals has been done.

[\(See PIL I11-III-02 Compliance Procedures for the Hazard Communication Standard\)](#)

[\(See PIL I11-III-02 Attachment INSPECTION PROCEDURES FOR HAZCOM\)](#)

S. Independent Contractors

See [30 CFR Part 45 Independent Contractors](#)

• MSHA ID Numbers - Independent Contractors

Any independent contractor that requests an MSHA identification number should receive one. MSHA does not require contractors to have identification numbers as a prerequisite to bidding for work contracts on mine sites. Inspectors should utilize caution when obtaining identification numbers for subsidiary companies when their controlling company already has an MSHA contractor identification number. In these cases, inspectors should consult with their supervisor prior to obtaining identification numbers.

Unless cited by MSHA, only those independent contractors performing, or with contracts to perform work at mine sites having any of the nine types of services or construction listed below, are required to have identification numbers:

- mine development, including shaft and slope sinking;
- construction or reconstruction of mine facilities including building or rebuilding preparation plants and mining equipment, and building additions to existing facilities;
- demolition of mine facilities;
- construction of dams;
- excavation or earthmoving activities involving mobile equipment;
- equipment installation such as crushers and mills;
- equipment service or repair of equipment on mine property for a period exceeding five consecutive days at a particular mine;
- material handling within mine property including haulage of coal, ore, refuse, etc., unless for the sole purpose of direct removal from or delivery to mine property; and
- drilling and blasting.

Each independent contractor who has an identification number is required to use this number on all mine sites. In the event of a change in ownership, MSHA may issue a new identification number based on the facts in each case.

- **Independent Contractor Register**

Title [30 CFR § 45.4\(a\)](#) requires independent contractors to provide mine operators with certain written information. [30 CFR § 45.4\(b\)](#) requires mine operators to maintain this information at the mine and to make it available to an MSHA inspector upon request. In the event that a contractor refuses to provide the mine operator with the necessary information, the contractor is subject to being cited for their failure to comply with 30 CFR § 45.4(a). In addition, if a mine operator refuses to make the required information available regarding a contractor to an inspector, the operator is subject to citation for violation of 30 CFR § 45.4(b).

However, there may be instances where the information required by [30 CFR § 45.4](#) is not immediately available due to an inadvertent omission which can be quickly corrected by the mine operator or contractor. Inspectors should keep in mind that 30 CFR § 45.4 is intended to give MSHA sufficient information so that an efficient inspection of the site can be conducted. If the missing information is promptly made available so that this goal can be accomplished, there is no violation of 30 CFR § 45.4 and a citation cannot be issued.

Example: Contracts are kept at a mine's central or headquarters office which is not located on the mine site. An independent contractor, contracted by the central office, has begun work on the mine without documentation required under 30 CFR § 45.4(a) provided to mine officials. When the missing documentation was discovered by an MSHA inspector, mine officials called the central office and the required documentation was faxed to the site. In this case, since the required documentation was obtained from the mine's central office in a reasonable time, a violation of the standard did not occur.

- **Compliance Responsibility**

Both independent contractors and mine operators are responsible for compliance with all applicable provisions of the Mine Act, standards and regulations. This overlapping compliance responsibility means that there may be circumstances in which it is appropriate for inspectors to issue citations or orders to both the independent contractor and to the mine operator for a single violation. Enforcement action against a mine operator for a violation also involving an independent contractor is normally appropriate in any of the following situations: (a) when the mine operator has contributed by either an act or by an omission to the occurrence of a violation in the course of an independent contractor's work; (b) when the mine operator has contributed by either an act or omission to the continued existence of a violation committed by an independent contractor; (c) when the mine operator's miners are exposed to the hazard; or (d) when the mine operator has control over the condition that needs abatement.

Inspectors should cite independent contractors for violations committed by their company or their employees. Whether particular provisions apply to independent contractors or to the work they are performing will be apparent in most instances. Questions regarding such matters should be discussed with the inspector's supervisor. [Volume III of MSHA's PPM](#) has additional information regarding independent contractors and their compliance with 30 CFR Parts 41, 48 and 50.

- **Issuing Citations and Orders to Contractors**

MSHA's policy is to issue citations and, where appropriate, orders to independent contractors for violations of applicable provisions of the Mine Act, standards or regulations. This policy is based on the Mine Act's definition of an "operator" which includes independent contractors performing services or construction at mines. Inspectors should obtain the necessary information and obtain an MSHA identification number for contractors not having an MSHA number that are found in violation of MSHA standards, regulations, or the Mine Act.

- **Inspecting all Independent Contractor Work Areas or Equipment**

Inspectors shall inspect areas where contractors are working and a representative amount of the equipment or machinery involved in mining or milling activities during each regular inspection unless circumstances do not allow that inspection. Inspectors shall also document that inspection in their general field notes or document why contractors were not inspected.

Example: ABC Mines employs contract drillers to drill their pit benches; however, the drillers are not physically on-site at the time of inspector Jones' regular inspection. Inspector Jones is told that the drillers will be on-site the following day so he returns the next day and inspects the driller's activities, their work areas, and equipment.

Example: ABC Mine employs contract drillers to drill their pit benches; however, they are not on-site at the time of inspector Jones' regular inspection. Jones is told by the mine operator that the drillers will not be on-site for about four months. Jones documents that absence in his notes and includes a statement that the drillers and their equipment were not inspected.

T. Review of Required Mine Operator and Contractor Documentation

During each regular inspection, inspectors shall review required mine operator and/or contractor documentation regarding mandatory health, training, and safety regulations. Documentation and/or forms which are required to be reviewed and noted by the inspector during every regular inspection include, at a minimum, the items listed on MSHA's inspection forms (Forms 4000-49 A, 4000-B, 4000-C, and 4000-D). Reviews of required on-site documentation should go back to the previous regular inspection conducted by MSHA. Further, during the course of their inspection, inspectors should observe whether documentation required to be posted on bulletin boards (e.g., petitions for modification) or available for review (e.g., Material Safety Data Sheets) is in fact posted or available for review.

Documentation such as records of workplace examinations and company maintained pre-operational inspections of mobile equipment shall be reviewed during the course of the inspection so any questions concerning those records can be resolved at that time. Other required records can be reviewed at a time determined by the inspector. Training records, and injury, illness, and employment reports shall be verified by inspectors by reviewing on-site documentation and discussing it with randomly selected miners and mine management to assure that this documentation is correct. Conversations with miners or mine management regarding significant issues found during this review should also be documented.

Inspectors should also verify that records at the mine or with the contractor match records on file (e.g., legal identity forms, Part 48 training plans) with MSHA. Part of this process includes determining whether the mine is classified correctly (mill, quarry, etc.) and the primary and secondary (if there is one) commodities are appropriately identified in MSHA's databases.

U. Health Sampling Activities

Evaluating miners' exposure to contaminants is a required part of every inspector's regular inspection activities. Metal and nonmetal mines utilize a wide variety of mining and milling techniques and equipment and, as a result, miners are exposed to a diverse group of environmental conditions. In conjunction with established Agency health priorities, inspectors must use a strategy to review a variety of potential health hazards at each mine and then, if warranted, select "high risk" occupations for personal sampling. Walk-around observations, ventilation system evaluations, reviews of materials mined and/or produced, determination of the chemicals used in the mining or milling process, discussions with miners and mine management, and direct-read area sampling should be used to determine which occupations or areas are "high risk" and, if warranted, should be sampled. The on-site contaminant assessment, should be accomplished while inspectors are inspecting mine work areas and equipment.

Ship all dust samples via expedited mailing services as soon as possible to the laboratory, to ensure lab receipt within 10 days of the collection date. [Note: Ten cubic centimeter (10 cc) Vacutainers, 50 milliliter (mL) evacuated bottles, and gas sampling bags require immediate shipping to the MSHA National Air and Dust Laboratory for analysis.] Inspectors should carefully document in the General Field Notes (MSHA Form 4000-49F or H) their observations and note why they chose to conduct sampling or elected to not conduct health sampling if they determine that the operator appeared to be in compliance with applicable health standards. If personal exposure sampling is performed, document the details on the Health Field Notes (MSHA Form 4000-31) or the applicable Radon Daughter Sampling Data (MSHA Form 4000-21), including relevant ventilation information. Appropriate contaminant sampling procedures and ventilation inspection information are in the [Metal and Nonmetal's Health Inspection Procedures Handbook](#).

(See also [PPM Vol. IV Subpart D Air Quality, Radiation, and Physical Agents](#) and [PPM Vol. III Part 62 Noise Enforcement Policy](#))

(See also [PPM Vol. IV Subpart D Sections 56/57.5002 Dust, Gas, Mist and Fume Surveys by Mine Operators](#))

V. Post-Inspection (Close Out) Conference

A post-inspection conference shall be conducted after the completion of each regular inspection. Representatives of the mine operator and miners shall be given the opportunity to participate in this conference. Depending on circumstances at the time, on-site independent contractors may be included in this conference or, if appropriate, a separate conference may be held. Joint conferences are encouraged; however, inspectors may hold separate conferences when requested by management, labor, or contractor representatives.

All enforcement actions taken during the inspection shall be discussed and documented on MSHA Form 4000-49c during the close-out conference. Inspectors shall also inform conference participants whether special actions (e.g., Special Assessment, Possible Knowing and Willful Violation, Flagrant Violation) will be recommended for any issued citation or order. Other items that should be discussed are conditions at the site relative to safety and health, and causes of enforcement actions, accidents, injuries, or illnesses. Inspectors should highlight positive occurrences of safe or healthful practices or conditions seen during the inspection.

At the conclusion of the close-out conference, inspectors will inform mine operators and/or independent contractors that they may request a safety and health conference with the District Manager or his/her designee to discuss citations and/or orders issued during the inspection. Documentation of this conference, including relevant comments made by the mine operator, miners' representative, or independent contractor regarding enforcement actions or safety and health issues shall be noted by inspectors on the conference worksheet.

Note: For large mines and mills that take longer than one week to complete an inspection, inspectors may conduct "mini-closeout" conferences with all relevant parties at the end of each week they are on-site. These conferences should, to a lesser degree than post-inspection conferences, address relevant safety and health issues and citations and/or orders issued to date. Dates, discussions, findings, and conversations made during these "mini-closeout" conferences shall be documented in the inspector's general field notes or on MSHA Form 4000-49c.

W. Documentation of Inspections

All citations, citation and general field notes, photographs, mine operator or miner supplied documents; MSHA or ATF inspection forms (e.g., impoundments, explosives) shall be included in inspection or investigation reports.

Inspectors should remember that MSHA's Regular Inspection Form (MSHA Form 4000-49B) includes a detailed list of items to be reviewed and completed during a regular inspection. To maximize an inspector's time, documentation contained in an inspector's general field notes should supplement rather than duplicate, that itemized list.

- **On-Site** - Documentation shall be substantially completed by inspectors on general field, health, citation or order notes while they are on mine or mill sites during all enforcement activities. In particular, general field note documentation shall include all areas, equipment, ventilation, work practices, and other similar activities observed by inspectors during the regular inspection. Documentation should detail those portions of a mine that were not inspected (e.g., barricaded areas, abandoned workings) and the specific reason(s) for the non-inspection. Finally, statements made by the mine operator, miners' representative, miners, or independent contractors, concerning enforcement actions or other pertinent safety and health topics should be noted on the inspector's conference worksheet.
- **Off-Site** - Special Assessment Review Forms, Possible Knowing and Willful Review Forms, Flagrant Violation Review Forms, and similar documentation must be completed by inspectors prior to submission of the regular inspection report to their supervisor. Inspection report submissions should not be delayed because health sampling analysis results (e.g., silica dust, welding fume analysis) have not yet been received. A separate health report is required to be submitted when the sampling analysis is received. More information on completing these forms is in MSHA's Citation and Order Writing Handbook.

CHAPTER SIX - GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR OTHER INSPECTIONS OR INVESTIGATIONS

Inspections other than regular inspections usually address a specific subject or a limited area of a mine or mill, such as hazard complaints, compliance follow-ups, or gassy mine inspections. The Mine Act, [Section 103\(f\)](#), mandates that miners' representatives be allowed to accompany inspectors only on regular inspections. While not mandated by the Mine Act, inspectors should notify designated miners' representatives of their arrival during other on-site inspections or investigations.

Metal and Nonmetal inspectors spend the majority of their time every year conducting mandated inspections. However, there are other mine inspections or investigation activities in which inspectors may be involved at any given time. The following procedures should be utilized when these activities are conducted.

A. Compliance Follow-up Inspections

Inspectors should notify mine management of their arrival at the site and then proceed directly to the location of the outstanding citations or orders. Once inspectors arrive at the site in question, the status of outstanding citations or orders should be determined and appropriate action taken.

B. Section 103(i) Inspections (Gassy Mine Inspections)

(See [PPM Vol. I Section 103\(i\) Required Hazardous Spot Inspections](#))

- **Spot Inspections**

Spot inspections can be conducted for a variety of purposes. They include, but are not limited to, determining the status of citations, notices to provide safeguards, or other MSHA enforcement documents issued during a previous inspection; collecting additional samples; and monitoring potentially hazardous conditions not covered by Section 103(i). Section 103(i) of the Act defines the conditions in mines under which spot inspections are to be conducted at various time intervals. Section 103(i) inspections shall not constitute a part of any other category of inspections and shall be directed specifically to the problems, hazards, or conditions under which the mine was classified as a Section 103(i) mine.

Designations for 103(i) spot inspection status shall not be delayed until the start of a new underground mine inspection quarter. New spot inspection status designations shall be made as soon as it has been determined that any metal or nonmetal mine liberates more than the required limits of methane within 24 hours, in accordance with the 1977 Mine Act with regards to 103(i) spot inspection designations. Evacuated bottle

samples shall be taken to determine methane liberation quarterly at mines designated to receive Section 103(i) spot inspections. Inspectors should also observe and document the general conditions and operation of the ventilation system when conducting the sampling. A copy of the MSHA Form 2000-43 shall be included in the shipment holder/ mailer. (Refer to the IPAL User's Manual for instructions on filling out MSHA Form 2000-43, Mine Atmosphere Sample Record.) [Note: Ten cubic centimeter (10 cc) Vacutainers, 50 milliliter (mL) evacuated bottles, and gas sampling bags require immediate shipping to the MSHA National Air and Dust Laboratory for analysis.]

The intervals of the Section 103(i) spot inspections are to be conducted in accordance with the Act that requires spot inspections at 5-, 10-, and 15-working-day intervals for mines liberating methane at certain rates. Using the 5-day language as an example with mines producing over 1,000,000 cubic feet of methane during a 24-hour period, the Act requires "...a minimum of one spot inspection by [an] authorized representative of all or part of such mine during every 5 working days at irregular intervals." (Mines working a 7 day-per-week schedule must have an inspection frequency of one day for each 5-day spot block maintained on the spot calendar – holidays will be considered as a working day). A 103(i) spot inspection should occur somewhere within each consecutive 5-day block of time. More than 5 days could pass between consecutive inspections so long as an inspection occurs within each block. This assures the required irregularity as well as meeting the frequency requirement. Over a 1-year period at the example mine, 73 103(i) spot inspections would be conducted. The same principle governs mines in 10- and 15-day status.

Mines with standard 5-day weeks and which are idle on weekends may adjust their spot calendars to exclude weekends. Holidays will be considered as a working day. Any type of work in any mine other than normal mine examinations and water pumping shall be considered a working day (e.g., belt moves, mine clean up, power moves, work during vacation shut downs, etc., shall be considered working days). Mines working more than 5 days per week must receive the appropriate 103(i) spot inspection at intervals determined by the mine's actual working days. District Managers are to review the working status of mines subject to 103(i) inspections and ensure that spot inspections are conducted at the appropriate interval of mine working days.

When the mine is placed into a 103(i) status due to one (or more) of the conditions described below the information concerning the change shall be entered and submitted on a MSHA Form 2000-209 (2000-209 Instruction Sheet and 2000-209 Union Codes) immediately.

1. **Ignition** – The mine is in 103(i) status due to an ignition or explosion. (Having had an ignition or explosion that resulted in death or serious injury within the past 5 years.)

2. **Hazard** - The mine is in 103(i) status due to especially hazardous conditions.
3. **5 Day** - The mine is in 103(i) status due to methane liberation. (Liberates more than 1,000,000 cubic feet of methane or other explosive gases during a 24-hour period.)
4. **10 Day** - The mine is in 103(i) status due to methane liberation. (Liberates more than 500,000 cubic feet during a 24-hour period, but less than one million cubic feet of methane or other explosive gases.)
5. **15 Day** - The mine is in 103(i) status due to methane liberation. (Liberates more than 200,000 cubic feet during a 24-hour period, but less than 500,000 cubic feet of methane or other explosive gases.)

A limited on-site review of mine examination and/or ventilation maps and records is considered essential to 103(i) inspection activities. The inspection shall pertain to the specific reason the mine was selected for a 103(i) inspection. For example, if a mine is included because it liberates excessive quantities of methane, 103(i) inspections should focus on working section ventilation, general mine ventilation, mining activities related to methane liberation, bleeder systems, seals (including new seal construction), or other areas where methane is likely to accumulate. This may include following the air course from intake(s), through the working place(s), to the return(s). Look for discrepancies between where the map or schematic shows air flows, and where the air actually flows, based on the location of existing or new ventilation control structures such as brattices, stoppings, regulators, and doors. Also check for inconsistencies in the indicated airflow rates. This should not however prevent another category of inspection or investigation from being conducted during the same visit to the mine. Subsequent actions on previously issued citations and orders are permitted as long as they are in the same general area and they do not interfere with the requirements of the 103(i) inspection. The original inspector notes should be distinct and separate for each type of inspection and subsequently filed with the respective inspection report.

The following guidelines shall be implemented for 103(i) spot mines:

1. Supervisors shall set up calendars to track mines that are included in the 103(i) inspection requirements. Section 103(i) spot inspections shall be conducted at irregular intervals.
2. A sufficient amount of time shall be dedicated to 103(i) spot inspections. The inspection shall pertain to the specific reason the mine was selected for a 103(i) spot inspection. For example, if a mine is being inspected because it liberates excessive quantities of methane, 103(i) inspections should focus on mining activities, bleeders, seals, methane detection equipment, and permissibility.

3. While conducting the 103(i) spot inspection, activities shall pertain to the specific reason the mine was selected for a 103(i) inspection. For example, if a mine is included because it liberates excessive quantities of methane, 103(i) inspections should focus on mining activities, bleeders, and seals.
4. When present on a working section during 103(i) inspection (regarding liberation of excessive methane), the inspector should measure the air quantity in the last open crosscut in each set of entries or rooms on each working section, at the end of the face ventilating device (if required) where equipment is being operated, and the air velocity at each end of the (longwall) face. Checks of airflow direction and quantity may be necessary to verify agreement between the ventilation system and the ventilation plan. Do not hesitate to request District assistance for technical support evaluation of complex ventilation systems.

At random intervals while conducting 103(i) inspections, the inspector shall observe the mine operator calibrating the methane monitor of face equipment.

Documentation Required: The inspector shall document the location and results of air readings in the narrative portion of the inspection notes.

(See [PPM Vol. I Section 103\(i\) Required Hazardous Spot Inspections](#))

C. Miscellaneous Inspections or Other Enforcement Activities

Inspectors should proceed directly to the appropriate site in the mine once they have announced their arrival to mine management. Enforcement action may or may not occur during these inspections depending on the circumstances.

D. Compliance Assistance Visits (CAV)

When conducting a CAV, the inspector should proceed directly to the site of the requested visit, after announcing his or her arrival to mine management. Inspectors will issue notices when they observe violations of any mandatory standard in the affected area. Mine operators should be informed that a future regular inspection will be conducted and that these notices will be reviewed at that time to ensure that the items noted during this visit have been corrected. If, during the regular inspection following the CAV, an inspector determines that a noted condition or practice has not been corrected, an appropriate citation or withdrawal order will be issued. Inspectors will not reference previously issued CAV notices in citations or orders.

Note: Even though citations cannot be issued in the area of the requested CAV during this visit, enforcement action will be initiated by inspectors should an imminent danger situation be observed during this visit.

E. Other Activities at Mine Sites

These activities are non-enforcement, usually on-site, visits intended to provide information to mine operators and/or miners regarding safe or healthy work practices, conditions, procedures, or accident or illness trends.

F. 30 CFR Part 50 Audits, Employment, Injury, and Illness Reporting and Recordkeeping Requirements

(See [PPM Vol. III Part 50 Accidents, Injuries, Illnesses, Employment, and Coal Production in Mines](#)),

(See [PIB P11-35 Re-Issue P08-02 -- Reporting Deaths on Mine Property](#)),

(See [PPL P13-V-02 Employment Agency Contracting and Part 50](#)),

(See MSHA Form 2000-7; Taxpayer Identification Number)

The Part 50 Audit Program

The District Manager shall be responsible for the audit program. Audits will be conducted under the inspection and investigation authority of Section 103 of the Mine Act and 30 CFR Part 50. Audits shall be conducted when necessary as determined by the District Manager. To accomplish these audits, auditors shall review and document information related to accidents, injuries, and occupational illnesses. They will also review Quarterly Mine Employment Reports (7000-2), which MSHA considers relevant and necessary to determine compliance with the reporting requirements. The auditors will be inspectors selected by the District Manager, and they should have a thorough understanding of Part 50 and audit procedures.

Responsibilities

1. District Manager. The District Manager will:
 - a) Direct the audit program and provide the Administrator with a report on the audit results;
 - b) Initiate a Part 50 audit whenever circumstances indicate that it is appropriate. See [PPM](#) for additional guidance;
 - c) Ensure that appropriate enforcement action is taken when required by audit results;

- d) Provide applicable data and guidance to the auditors; and
 - e) Furnish to the auditors documentation that establishes MSHA policy or procedures concerning 30 CFR Part 50 and the audit program.
2. Auditors. Part 50 auditors will:
- a) Request an audit package for the mine. There are two alternate methods for this:
 - 1. The audit package can be obtained from the MSHA intranet website (hyperlink only accessible when connected to the MSHA network) by clicking on: 1) MSHA Report Center; 2) DW Production Reports; 3) Part 50 Reports; and 4) Part 50 Audit Checklist. Questions should be directed to the Office of Program Evaluation and Information Resources (PEIR), Information Technology Center (ITC), (303) 231-5475; or
 - 2. The computer-generated audit forms can be obtained from ITC. The forms that cover the preceding 3 years must be requested at least 2 weeks prior to conducting the audit.
 - b) Coordinate the audit with the inspector conducting the regular inspection at the mine being audited;
 - c) Keep the District Manager informed of all changes in plans, schedules, problems that arise during each audit, and any other factors that could affect the progress of the audit; and
 - d) Have some latitude in determining how the audit will be conducted (e.g., number of days and scope of review).

Structuring and Conducting the Audit. Data collection, data analysis, and audit review should be as consistent as possible so that a national analysis can be based on the same type of data.

Data Collection and Verification. The purpose of data collection in these audits is to allow auditors to check, to the extent possible, all data necessary to determine operator compliance with Part 50. The auditors will review records and conduct interviews, as well as observe mine operator procedures and practices.

In all instances, MSHA Form 7000-1, MSHA Form 7000-2, and the mine operator accident investigation report (where applicable) must be compared against the

employment, hours worked, and injury and occupational illness data obtained from Office of Injury and Employment Information (OIEI). Operators who refuse access to such records will be cited.

In addition, auditors should verify compliance by using other data sources. Such sources may include miners' representative and employee interviews and examination of other available records including state workers' compensation records. (Also see [30 CFR § 50.11](#).)

If discrepancies are found, amended copies of forms shall be immediately submitted by the operator/contractor to OIEI.

Protection of Personal Information. Personal information collected in an audit shall be protected from public disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, [5 U.S.C. § 552](#), and the Privacy Act, [5 U.S.C. § 552a](#), as applicable.

Procedures for Safeguarding Personally Identifiable Medical or Other Sensitive Information:

In conducting audits, it is often necessary for MSHA to collect personally identifiable medical information about miners-injuries or illnesses. Because, in general, access to personally identifiable medical or other sensitive information raises privacy concerns, the following procedures are being issued to protect the information collected. A copy of these procedures shall be included in Part 50 audit files.

1. Filing of information. Part 50 audit information shall be kept in a file (electronic or manual) separate from the uniform mine file or any other inspection records, and shall be identified by the mine name and mine identification number. The cover of the file shall have a label stating: "May contain personally identifiable medical or other sensitive information -- Authorized Users Only."
2. Storage of information. Information shall be stored in a locked file cabinet, safe, or secure room when not being reviewed.
3. Authorized users. Access to the information shall be limited to persons whose official duties require them to work with such information, but may include persons who have a need to know the information to perform related duties.
4. Access control system. A log or other method shall be used to identify persons who have access to the information and to account for removal of information from the stored area.

5. Safeguarding during transport. Persons shall maintain control of the information during transport and shall protect the information from unauthorized or unintentional access, disclosure, modification, or destruction.

Preparation and Distribution of Audit Results. The preparation of audit results and findings will include input and cooperation from all audit members. The auditors will furnish a copy of audit results to the District Manager. A review and discussion will be held if necessary. A copy of the audit results will be filed with background data and relevant documentation on the audit.

The District Manager will send a copy of the completed audit to the Chief, OIEL. (Refer to the PC-7014 Yellow Jacket Pt 50 Q&As; Part 50 Accident Rep.: 74 Fed. Reg. 68918 (Dec. 29, 2009); and Part 50: 75 Fed. Reg. 21990 (April 27, 2010) for further guidance and additional information.)

G. Hazard Complaint Inspections

Inspectors should proceed directly to the site of the alleged hazard(s) once they have announced their arrival at the site to mine management. Inspectors should also refer to MSHA's [Hazardous Condition Complaint Procedures Handbook, PH15-I-08](#), when conducting these types of inspections)

(See [PPM Vol. I Section 103\(g\) Referrals of Hazardous Condition Complaints](#))
(See [PIB P10-16 Hazardous Condition Complaints and Right to Request Inspections](#))
(See [PPM Vol. III Part 43 Procedures for Processing Hazardous Condition Complaints](#))

H. Accident Investigations

MSHA's accident investigation procedures are designed to result in efficient and orderly collection of all information relevant to a mining accident and to provide guidance for investigators in determining causes. Upon conclusion of the investigation the review and analysis of all relevant information, MSHA issues a report regarding its findings and conclusions. The purpose of the report is to disseminate information to the mining community and others for purposes of accident and illness prevention.

MSHA's accident investigations include determinations of whether violations of mandatory standards, regulations, or the Mine Act contributed to the event. In addition to providing very important information, the findings of these investigations provide a basis for potentially guiding future MSHA health and safety standards, procedures, and policies. Inspectors should be familiar with and follow the procedures in MSHA's Accident/Illness Investigations Procedures Handbook when conducting accident or

illness investigations. Procedures for formal reports of accident investigations are covered in the [Accident/Illness Investigations Procedures Handbook](#), PH11-I-1. Reports required in addition to the formal report will contain the citations and orders issued during the accident investigation for violations that contributed to the cause of the accident. Also, Section 103(j) or 103(k) orders issued during the investigation are to be included in the accident report. All other citations and orders issued that are not pertinent to the cause of the accident shall be included in a separate report, usually a spot inspection report. Refer to Part 50 Direct Final Rule, 74 Fed. Reg. 68918 (Dec. 29, 2009) for additional information.

([See Accident/Illness Investigations Procedures Handbook, PH11-I-1](#))

Issuance of Citations for Failure to Immediately Notify MSHA of an Accident Under 30 CFR § 50.10:

Violations for failure to immediately notify MSHA of accidents, as defined in [30 CFR § 50.2\(h\)](#), may not be cited under [30 CFR § 50.10](#) alone. Instead, violations of § 50.10 must be cited using one of the following paragraphs:

- a) § 50.10(a) for accidents involving death of an individual at the mine;
- b) § 50.10(b) for accidents involving injury of an individual at the mine which has a reasonable potential to cause death;
- c) § 50.10(c) for accidents involving entrapment of an individual at the mine which has a reasonable potential to cause death; or
- d) § 50.10(d) for any other accident which would include an entrapment of an individual at a mine for more than 30 minutes and accidents defined in § 50.2(h)(4) - (12).

I. Petition for Modification Investigations

At times, mine operators or miners' representatives may ask that MSHA modify the application of any mandatory safety standard. MSHA may grant this request if it is determined that an alternative method of achieving the result of the standard exists which will guarantee the same measure of protection of the standard or if application of the standard at the mine will result in a diminution of safety to the miners of that mine. Section 101(c) of the Mine Act only allows petitions for modification requests to be filed for relief from application of mandatory safety standards. Procedures for conducting these investigations and submitting the results of those investigations are in MSHA's Coal and Metal and Nonmetal Petition for Modifications Handbook.

As required by [30 CFR § 44.9](#), mine operators with no representative of miners are required to post a copy of each request for a petition for modification on the mine's bulletin board. This request is required to remain posted until a ruling on the request for a petition becomes final.

The filing of an appeal of a citation or order by a mine operator or contractor with the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission (Commission) or the filing of a petition for modification does not relieve the operator or contractor of the responsibility of complying with the cited mandatory standard by the established due date. These activities are not a basis to extend or terminate any citation unless inspectors are directed otherwise.

CHAPTER SEVEN – INSPECTION NOTES, PHOTOGRAPHS AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION

A. Documentation

Inspectors are responsible for accurately documenting information collected or observed during on-site activities and entering it promptly, if appropriate, into MSHA's database. They are also responsible for assuring that the information they collect which is not entered into MSHA's database (e.g., safety or health field notes) is accurate and represents conditions or activities present at the time the notes were taken. Finally, they are responsible for accurately completing applicable Agency forms relative to the activity conducted.

Inspectors are also responsible for taking clear, concise, detailed, and factual notes in ink for all inspections or investigations, particularly those involving enforcement activities. Enforcement activities include activities where citations and orders could be or will be issued. Examples of these activities include, but are not limited to:

- Regular inspections;
- Compliance follow-up (spot) inspections;
- Hazard complaint inspections (verbal and written);
- Attempted inspections;
- Miscellaneous inspections or other enforcement activities;
- Gassy mine inspections (103i);
- Accident investigations, and
- Part 50 audits.

Complete, legible, and factual notes are essential to evaluate and assess enforcement actions, conduct inspection conferences, defend enforcement actions, accurately respond to correspondence, determine what portions of a mine, mill, or equipment were or were not inspected, and facilitate testimony in judicial proceedings. When conducting any enforcement activity, general field notes and citation and order documentation shall be substantially completed while inspectors are on the mine or mill site.

Further, arrival and departure times shall be documented in the inspector's general field notes for each day he or she conducts or is involved with any onsite inspection activity. The lead inspector of a group of inspectors conducting inspections should also take appropriate steps to assure that each inspector's notes are identifiable as coming from a particular inspector.

Example: Inspector Joe Jones was selected as the lead inspector for a group of inspectors assigned to conduct a regular inspection of a large open pit mine. Inspector Jones asked each inspector in the group to place his or her initials on every page of their general field notes so that the inspector generating the notes could be easily identified in the future.

B. Documenting Confidential Communications, Documents, or Trade Secrets

- **From Miners**

There are times when an inspector engages in communications or receives documents from miners related to safety and health issues at a mine. This communication may be verbal or in writing. Inspectors should follow the procedures in [MSHA's Hazardous Condition Complaint Procedures Handbook](#) if informed by a miner of a hazardous condition at the mine.

Complaints made under Mine Act § 103(g) are confidential. In addition, other types of communications may be confidential. In most instances, statements made or documents given to an inspector by a miner outside the presence of a mine management representative are considered confidential.

Notes generated by inspectors as a result of these communications should be written on a separate general field notes page and marked "confidential" so that they are appropriately identified, protected from inappropriate disclosure, and appropriately preserved. Documents or photographs given to inspectors should also be labeled in the same manner with documentation indicating who gave the inspector the material and the date it was given to him or her.

- **From Mine Operators**

Inspectors are sometimes given documentation or photographs from mine operators or miners that detail trade secrets or similar confidential business information. Under the Trade Secrets Act, 18 U.S.C. § 1905, and the Freedom of Information Act, federal employees are required to keep trade secrets information confidential. Inspectors should label this type of material "confidential." A general field note should also be attached to the item(s) identifying the individual (by name and title) who gave the inspector the documents or photographs, why the information should be protected (e.g., trade secret), and the date it was given to the inspector.

- **From Miners' Relatives and/or Non-Miners**

Inspectors also receive verbal or written information about safety, health, and other conditions at a mine from miners' wives, relatives, or other non-miners. Inspectors should follow the procedures outlined in [MSHA's Hazardous Condition Complaint](#)

[Procedures Handbook](#) if they are informed by one of these individuals of a hazardous condition at a mine.

Unless otherwise indicated by the individual providing the information, notes recorded by the inspector as a result of these communications should be written on a separate MSHA note form and marked “confidential” so that they are appropriately identified, protected from inappropriate disclosure, and appropriately preserved. Documents or photographs given to inspectors by these individuals should also be labeled in the same manner with documentation indicating who gave the inspector the material and the date it was given to him or her.

C. Required Documentation

Regular Inspections

Inspectors shall document, at a minimum, the following information in their general field notes:

- Dates of each day spent on-site;
- Daily arrival and departure times from the mine or mill site;
- Names and titles of company officials, miners’ representatives, and miners who either traveled with the inspection party, attended the pre- or post-conference, or discussed safety and health concerns with the inspector;
- Relevant statements made during pre- and post-inspection conferences;
- Fixed and mobile equipment and areas of the mine that were inspected including equipment and areas of the mine that were not inspected. Inspectors should document with specificity why equipment or areas of the mine or mill were not inspected;
- Explosives storage magazines, facilities, and relevant records inspected;
- Barricaded or abandoned areas of the mine that were inspected including barricaded or abandoned areas of the mine that were not inspected. Inspectors should document with specificity why barricaded or abandoned areas of the mine were not inspected;
- Sampling location and readings taken from direct read instruments (i.e. sound level meters, multi-gas detectors, detector tubes);
- The general condition and operation of ventilation systems;
- Areas of major construction or new projects;
- Relevant conversations with miners, miners’ representatives, and mine operator’s representatives regarding issues raised during the inspection and/or safety and health issues at the mine or mill;

- The make, model number, serial number, or other unique identifier of any equipment inspected; including but not limited to mobile and stationary equipment;
- When inspecting mobile equipment inspectors shall document at a minimum that the following safety features were inspected; service and park brakes, seatbelts, horns and backup alarms, lights, steering, and access to elevated equipment.
- When inspecting fixed equipment inspectors shall document at a minimum the following; guarding, access, and electrical compliance;
- When inspecting active surface mining areas, inspectors shall document at a minimum the following; approximate height of highwalls, approximate width of benches, general condition of the active mining area, and method of mining being used. A photo showing the general overview of the active mining area shall also be included with the inspection report. The overview photo is to be mounted on a Photo Mounting Worksheet (MSHA Form 4000-125); and
- Other relevant safety and health information.

Inspectors should remember that MSHA's Regular Inspection Form (MSHA Form 4000-49B) includes a detailed list of items required to be reviewed and completed during a regular inspection. To maximize an inspector's time, documentation contained in an inspector's general field notes should supplement, not duplicate, that itemized list. Inspectors should follow the requirements of MSHA's Health Inspection Procedures Handbook (see [MSHA's Handbook Series Home Page](#)) for documenting health sampling activities conducted during any inspections. Documentation of the above information shall be done on general and health (if appropriate) field notes and it shall be substantially completed while the inspector is on the mine or mill site.

All Other Enforcement Activities

Inspectors shall document, at a minimum, the following information in their general field notes:

- Dates of each day spent on-site;
- Daily arrival and departure times from the mine or mill site;
- Names of company officials, miners' representatives, and miners who either traveled with the inspection party, attended a pre- or post-conference, or discussed safety and health concerns with the inspector;
- Relevant statements made by miners, miners' representatives, and mine operator's representatives; and
- Specific equipment and/or mine areas that were inspected.

Documentation on general and health (if appropriate) field notes shall be substantially completed while the inspector is on the mine or mill site.

Non-Enforcement Activities

Inspectors shall document, unless instructed otherwise, the following information in their general field notes:

- Purpose of their visit;
- Name(s) of the individuals contacted during the visit;
- Dates of each day spent on-site; and
- Daily arrival and departure times from the mine or mill site.

Documentation on general and health (if appropriate) field notes shall be substantially completed while the inspector is on the mine or mill site.

D. Required Documentation for Citations and Orders

[Section 104\(a\)](#) of the Mine Act requires that each citation or order be in writing and describe with particularity the nature of the violation, including a reference to the provision of the Mine Act, standard, rule, regulation, or order alleged to have been violated. In addition, the citation is required to fix a reasonable time for the abatement of the violation. “One-line” citation or order narratives or documentation of such violations is not acceptable under any circumstances because they generally do not meet the requirements of Section 104(a) of the Mine Act. However, do not include names in the body of a citation or order. To assure that quality citations and orders are issued, inspectors shall document the following information at the time it was observed on their citation and order note forms:

Basic violation documentation -

- Date;
- Time;
- Specific location (if applicable);
- Diagrams (if applicable);
- Measurements, such as: sampling results, ventilation rates (if applicable);
- Statements of affected miners, miners’ representatives, and mine management concerning the cited condition or practice;
- Equipment serial and/or model numbers;
- Relevant information obtained from manufacturer’s manuals or similar materials;
- Mine operator’s policies, procedures, etc., relevant to the violation; and
- Management’s knowledge of, or lack of knowledge of, the violation.

Gravity documentation -

- Exposure, or lack of exposure, of all miners to the cited condition or practice;
- Number of miners potentially affected by the violation (assuming continued mining

- were to occur);
- Seriousness of the cited condition or practice; and
- Type or nature of potential injury.

Negligence (all items that are applicable to the cited condition or practice)-

- Was the cited condition or practice obvious?
- Was the cited condition or practice extensive rather than isolated?
- How long had the condition or practice existed?
- How often and how many times did the operator's agent travel or work in the area?
- Was the mine operator's agent told of the condition or practice?
- Did the seriousness of the hazard justify increased attention by the mine operator to prevent or correct it?
- Had the same or similar violations been previously cited at the mine?
- Had the mine operator or a miner inspected the cited area prior to the citation being issued?
- Was the violation the result of a miner's or an agent of the operator's conduct?
- Had the miner or miners received training? Was it effective or adequate?
- Did an agent of the operator participate in or direct the activity leading or contributing to the violation?
- Did mine records or mine management actions indicate an attempt to correct the cited condition or practice?
- Did the mine operator have rules, policies, or procedures to report and correct these types of hazards?
- Did the mine operator enforce those rules, procedures, or policies?
- Did an agent(s) of the operator discuss the violation in meetings?
- Were miners warned or disciplined for acts associated with the violation?
- Was an agent(s) of the operator aware of the requirements of the cited standard?

E. Photographs

An accurate photograph taken at the time a violation was observed enhances an inspector's notes, refreshes memories, and substantiates the evaluation of the violation. Photographs also assist in resolving differences of opinion between mine operators and inspectors as to conditions present at the time. Pictures also benefit both parties by expediting settlement agreements, proposed penalty assessments and administrative review proceedings by providing a pictorial illustration of the area or equipment in question. Inspectors should exercise caution when taking photographs and never expose themselves, or allow others involved with the picture, to potential safety hazards.

Taking Photographs

- Does the photograph depict and gauge the cited area or equipment or other

- relevant condition or practice?
- Was more than a single photograph needed to accurately depict the condition?
- Was the photograph taken at the time the condition was observed or at a different time?
- Does the photograph accurately portray the hazard or potential hazard miners may encounter?

Documentation of Photographs

Photographs taken during enforcement activities should be individually mounted on a Photo Mounting Worksheet (MSHA Form 4000-125) and included with the inspection or investigation report. The form should be completed in its entirety for each photograph. Only photographs deemed relevant to enforcement activities should be included with reports. Required information includes:

- MSHA Mine Identification Number;
- Event number;
- Photograph number; and
- Inspector's name.

Photographs – Other Persons

On many inspections or investigations, other persons in the inspection party may also take photographs of cited conditions or practices. If this activity occurs, inspectors should document the following information in their general field notes:

- That another person (e.g., mine operator, miners' representative, other person) took a photograph of the condition or equipment that was cited by the inspector;
- If the photograph taken by the mine operator, miners' representative, or other person was taken at the same time as the inspector took his or her photograph;
- Whether the photograph was taken with a digital or film camera or a camera similar to a Polaroid™ camera; and
- The name and title of the person who took the photograph.

F. Completion and Submission of Other Required Documentation

Possible Knowing/Willful Review Violation Form (7000-20)

These forms must detail the facts and circumstances justifying the inspector's recommendation for conducting a possible knowing or willful investigation. Inspectors will initiate a Possible Knowing/Willful Violation Review Form for Citations and Orders outlined in the [Citation and Order Writing Handbook](#):

- 107(a) orders with 104(a) citations;

- 107(a) orders with 104(d) citations;
- 107(a) orders with 104(d) orders
- 107(a) orders with 104(e) citations
- 104(d) citations identified as S&S and with an evaluation of "high" for negligence;
- 104(d) orders identified as S&S and with an evaluation of "high" for negligence
- 104(g) orders identified as S&S and with an evaluation of "high" for negligence
- 104(e) orders with an evaluation of "high" for negligence
- Any citation/order determined to meet the criteria of a flagrant violation; and
- Citations issued for working in violation of an order, which would be citation with a type of Action of 104(a) and a Section of Act populated with the following orders: 103(j), 103(k), 104(b), 104(d1), 104(d2), 104(e1), 104(e2), 104(g), 107(a).

Note: See the SEI-Special Enforcement and Investigations MSIS User Manual for additional information.

Only a violation of a mandatory health or safety standard, or order issued under the Mine Act shall be reviewed for possible further action. This includes violations of 30 CFR Parts 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 56, 57, 58, and 62. The inspector and their supervisor shall first review each citation or order to ensure that the violation has been properly cited.

The above review requirements may be altered by the Administrator or District Manager. Once the form has been completed and reviewed by the supervisor, the District Office shall be sent a packet that includes:

- The original Possible Knowing/ Willful Violation Review Form;
- A copy of the mine Legal Identity Report;
- A copy of relevant general field notes, if any;
- A copy of the citation/order notes;
- Appropriate photographs;
- A copy of the inspector's conference worksheet;
- A copy of the relevant citation(s) or order(s); and
- A copy of all citation or order modifications.

Each photograph should be mounted on a completed Photo Mounting Worksheet (MSHA Form 4000-125). The packet shall be submitted to the District Office within five business days following the date the citation(s) or order(s) was issued. Any exceptions to this policy shall be approved in advance by the field office supervisor with concurrence from the District Office.

Special Assessment Review (SAR) Form (7000-32)

Special assessment is the process for determining an appropriate civil penalty without using the penalty tables in [30 CFR 100.3](#). Special assessment is mandatory for the following types of violations:

- Violations for which the daily penalty has been invoked under Section 110(b) of the Mine Act;
- Violations issued to miners for smoking or carrying smoking materials under Section 110(g) of the Mine Act;
- Flagrant violations as defined in Section B of the Mine Improvement and New Emergency Response Act of 2006 (MINER Act). The SAR form check box shall be marked to identify all flagrant violations identified for special assessment.

The following violations are required to be reviewed for special assessment:

- Section 104(a) citations for violations of certain sections of the Mine Act (see the matrix at the end of this section);
- Violations that contributed to a fatality or serious injury; and
- Violations of the standards identified as “Rules to Live By”.

However, special assessment is not mandatory for those violations as they may involve circumstances for which MSHA determines, in its discretion, that special assessment is not warranted.

Violations involving discrimination under Section 105(c) of the Mine Act and personal liability under Section 110(c) of the Mine Act are not required to be reviewed for special assessment because they are not recommended for assessment by the District Manager. The above review requirements may be altered by the Administrator or District Manager, as appropriate.

Completion of a Special Assessment Review form (MSHA Form 7000-32) is **mandatory** for each violation that is reviewed for special assessment. The completed SAR form must describe the facts and circumstances justifying the recommendation for special assessment. The Office of Assessments will review each recommendation for special assessment and make the final decision, conferring with the Metal and Nonmetal Mine Safety and Health program areas as necessary. The following matrix is intended to assist enforcement personnel in determining whether a violation is required to be special assessed or reviewed for special assessment.

**Violations Requiring Submission of an
MSHA Special Assessment Review Form**

Category	Negligence Evaluation				
	None	Low	Moderate	High	Reckless Disregard
Fatality / Serious Injury	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Section 104(a) citations for violations of the following sections of the Mine Act: 103(a); 103(f); 103(h); 103(j); 103(k); 104(b); 104(d); 104(e); 104(g)(1); 107(a); or 110(j)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Flagrant Violations*	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes
110(b) Daily Penalty for Failure to Abate*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
110(g) Smoking or Smoking Materials Violations Cited to Miners*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
*Special assessment required					

Once the SAR form has been completed by the inspector and reviewed and approved by the supervisor, the District Office shall be sent a package that includes:

- The completed Special Assessment Review Form;
- A copy of the mine Legal Identity Report;
- A copy of relevant general field notes, if any;
- A copy of the citation/order notes;
- Appropriate photographs;
- A copy of the inspector's closeout conference worksheet (if applicable);
- A copy of the relevant citation(s) or order(s); and
- A copy of all citation or order modifications.

Each photograph should be mounted on a completed Photo Mounting Worksheet (MSHA Form 4000-125). The package should be submitted to the appropriate District Office within five business days after completion of the inspection or investigation. Any exceptions to this policy shall be approved by the field office supervisor.

CHAPTER EIGHT - INSPECTOR'S PORTABLE APPLICATION FOR LAPTOPS (IPAL)

A. IPAL Program

IPAL is an MSHA computer program which assists inspectors in maintaining inspection data and follow-up requirements in a Windows® environment. The program interfaces with MSHA's Standardized Information System (MSIS) and allows a seamless transfer of enforcement and inspector data into and out of the system.

B. Inspector's Responsibilities

Inspectors are responsible for assuring that information they have entered into the IPAL program for inspections and associated activities is transmitted to MSIS on a regular and timely basis so that Agency data is updated appropriately. Information uploaded to the IPAL Data Center is processed into MSIS each night. The inspector's Weekly Activity Reports are also included in the IPAL uploads once 40 hours are accounted for during the week.

To help prevent loss of inspection data, it is recommended that inspectors retain the 10 most current IPAL upload files. These files can be kept on the D: drive of the laptop and regularly copied to the H: drive on the network. As a new file is generated, the oldest file may be deleted to maintain a constant ten (10) files. This file retention is helpful when system problems are experienced processing IPAL uploads into MSIS or a laptop malfunctions.

The recommended process for IPAL transactions is for inspectors to perform a data upload upon return to their respective field office. This information will be processed into MSIS. Prior to leaving the office for inspection activities, usually Monday morning, an IPAL download should then be done to update the laptop with the most current information in preparation for the week's planned activities.

In addition to downloading data (usually on Monday mornings), inspectors should also remain connected to the network in order to receive the latest updates to the computer including software patches and anti-virus updates.

C. Information Available in the Offline Files

Printed inspection materials are available in electronic format on the inspector laptops. Resources include Title 30 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Mine Act, the MINER Act, MSHA's Program Policy Manual and Program Bulletins, Agency procedures handbooks, and the IPAL User's Guide. Approved MSHA forms either as printable, or

fillable and printable, are also included. This material is kept current and is searchable as needed. These files eliminate the need to carry printed manuals and materials in the inspector's car. Links to these electronic documents are found in the "Handbook Shortcut" icon on the laptop desktop.

APPENDIX

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Date(s)		ID No.	Event No.
Inspection No.	Travel Area	Mine Status	Telephone
Company		Mine	City, State

Directions to Operation

Mine Type	Mining Method	Product
-----------	---------------	---------

No. of Employees	Work Schedule	Hours/Shift	Shifts/Day	Days/Week
------------------	---------------	-------------	------------	-----------

MSHA Inspector(s)

Inspection Party

Office Files Review

1. Past inspection reports and MIS printouts reviewed? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>				
2. Number of Health Samples Taken: Noise <input type="checkbox"/> Dust <input type="checkbox"/> DPM <input type="checkbox"/> Other (list) <input type="checkbox"/>				
3. Sample following GPRA Goals? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>				
4. 104 (d) series? Initial Action: Date <input type="checkbox"/> Cit./Ord. No. <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>				
5. 104 (e) pattern of violations? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>				
6. Does this Mine have Equipment/Areas with "P" Codes? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> "D" Codes? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>				
7. Does the Mine have any Petitions for Modification? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Reviewed? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>				
8. Miner's Representative Meets Requirement of 30 CFR Part 40 Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>				

Other pertinent file information:

Pre-inspection Conference

Date

Company Attendees

Miners Representative

Address

Telephone

Comments/Issues

	Issued	Terminated	Extended	Modified	Replaced by Order	Vacated	Outstanding
Citations							
Orders			N/A		N/A		

Number of Special Assessment Reviews Completed _____

Number of Possible Knowing & Willful Reviews Completed _____

Supv. Initial _____

Regular Inspection Information

U.S. Department of Labor
Mine Safety and Health Administration



Recordkeeping		Event No.	
Part 41 - Legal ID reviewed with mine operator?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Commodity correct?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Commodity: _____
Part 45 - Ind. contractor list reviewed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>		
Part 46/48 - Enforceable? Check one	46 <input type="checkbox"/> 48 <input type="checkbox"/>		
Training plan reviewed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Number of Training Forms reviewed: _____			
Part 47 - Hazard communication program reviewed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
MSDS on-site?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Part 50 - Reviewed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Comments: _____			
Part 56 - Review the following records, maps, plans, and logs as well as those items required to be posted on the mine bulletin board			
	Reviewed	N/A	Citation Issued
56.3203 Rock bolt tests & certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
56.4201 Firefighting equipment inspection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Date _____
56.4330 Firefighting, evacuation & rescue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
56.12028 Continuity & resistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Date _____
56.13015 Air receivers/pressure vessels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
56.13030 Boiler inspection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
56.14100 Equipment safety defects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
56.18002 Examination of working places	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
56.18010 First aid training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Date _____
56.18014 Emergency medical service/transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
56.19022 Hoist rope measurement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
56.19023 Hoist rope examination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
56.19057 Hoist operator physical examination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
56.19121 Hoist inspection, testing and maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part 62			
62.110(e) Miner notification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
62.110(e) Records of notification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
62.171(c) Audiometric test records	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
62.175(b) Reportable hearing loss	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
62.180(b) Hearing conservation program training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was entire mine inspected? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If not explain: _____			

MSHA Form 4000-49B-Part 56 August, 2008 (Revised)

October 2009 (Release 2)

Regular Inspection Information

U.S. Department of Labor
Mine Safety and Health Administration

Recordkeeping		Event No.	
Part 41 - Legal ID reviewed with mine operator?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Commodity correct?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Commodity: _____
Part 45 - Ind. contractor list reviewed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>		
Part 47 - Hazard communication program reviewed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	MSDS on-site?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Part 48 - Training plan reviewed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Number of Form 5000-23 reviewed:	_____
Part 49 - Mine rescue requirements met?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>		
Mine rescue compliance statement or alternate plan on file with MSHA?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>		
Mine rescue compliance statement or alternate plan posted at mine?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>		
Part 50 - Reviewed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Comments:	
Part 57 - Review the following records, maps, plans, and logs as well as those items required to be posted on the mine bulletin board			
	Reviewed	N/A	Citation Issued
57.3203 Rock bolt tests & certification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.4201 Firefighting equipment inspection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.4330 Firefighting, evacuation & rescue	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Date _____
57.4361 Underground evacuation drills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Date _____
57.5040 Radon exposure monitoring	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.5065(a) Purchase records of diesel fuel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.5066(b) Maintenance log	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.5066(c) Competence to perform maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.5070(b) Annual DPM training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.5071(c) Corrective action taken	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.5071(d) Sampling method and results	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.8520 Ventilation plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.8525 Main fan maintenance schedule	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.11053 Escape & evacuation plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.12028 Continuity & resistance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Date _____
57.13015 Air receivers/pressure vessels	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.13030 Boiler inspection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.14100 Equipment safety defects	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.15030 Self-rescuer maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.18002 Examination of working places	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.18010 First aid training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.18014 Emergency medical service/transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Date _____
57.19022 Hoist rope measurement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.19023 Hoist rope examination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
57.19057 Hoist operator physical examination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 57.22204 Daily fan insp. Class I-A, II-A, III, V-A
57.19121 Hoist inspection, testing and maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 57.22229 Weekly testing of class I-A, III, V-A
57.5060 DPM Sampling? (If yes, completed Form 4000-128)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 57.22230 Weekly testing of class II-A gassy mines
Part 62			
62.110(e) Miner notification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
62.110(e) Records of notification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
62.171(c) Audiometric test records	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
62.175(b) Reportable hearing loss	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
62.180(b) Hearing conservation program training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was entire mine inspected?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	If not explain: _____	

MSHA Form 4000-49B-Part 57 August, 2008 (Revised)

October 2009 (Release 2)

Regular Inspection Information

U.S. Department of Labor
Mine Safety and Health Administration



Closeout Conference	Date	Event No.
---------------------	------	-----------

Attendees

Operator/Miners Representative/Inspector Comments

Notified of possible special assessment?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Notified of possible knowing/willful violation?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Notified operator they can request safety & health conference?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
Best practices reviewed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>

MSHA Form 4000-49C, August, 2008 (Revised)
October 2009 (Release 2)

Miscellaneous Inspection Information**U.S. Department of Labor**
Mine Safety and Health Administration

Date(s)	ID No.	Event No.
Inspection Code	Telephone	
Company	Mine	
Directions to Operation		

MSHA Inspector(s)

Inspection Party

	Issued	Terminated	Extended	Modified	Replaced by Order	Vacated	Outstanding
Citations							
Orders			N/A		N/A		
Number of Health Samples Taken: Noise Dust DPM Other (list)							
Inspection Justification/Comments							

Supv. Initial _____

Photo Mounting Worksheet

U.S. Department of Labor
Mine Safety and Health Administration



Mine ID Number: _____ Event Number: _____

Date/Time: _____ Inspector: _____

Citation/Order Number: _____ Photo Number: _____

Location/Photo Description: _____

MSHA Form 4000-125, June 2009
October 2009 (Release 2)

Metal and Nonmetal
Tailings & Water Impoundment Inspection Form

US Department of Labor
Mine Safety & Health Administration



Note: This form should be completed for all dams classified as having high or significant hazard potential and for low-hazard-potential dams which either are 25 feet or more in height (and can store more than 15 acre-feet) or can store 50 acre-feet or more (and exceed 6 feet in height). For the same Mine ID Number, report each dam that meets any of these criteria on a separate form. Fill out as much information as can be obtained from the operator or directly determined.

MINE ID _____ Inspector _____

Date _____

Mine Name _____

Mining Company _____

Mine Product _____ MSHA District _____

MSHA Field Office _____

Name of Dam or Impoundment _____

Dam ID Number _____

(The Dam ID Number is assigned by the District and is the MSHA Mine ID Number followed by -01, -02, etc. so that individual mines at the mine that meet the hazard potential or size criteria have unique numbers.)

State _____ County _____

Does a state agency regulate this dam? Yes ___ No ___

If So, which State Agency? _____

Type of information provided on this form: New ___ Update ___

Is impoundment currently under construction? Yes ___ No ___

Dam owner's contact person _____ Phone # _____

The dam was designed by _____

IMPOUNDMENT FUNCTION:

_____ Tailings/Mine Waste Disposal _____ Sediment Control
_____ Fresh Water Supply _____ Water Treatment _____ Other

Nearest Downstream Town Name: _____

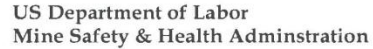
Distance from the Dam _____ miles

Dam Location (coordinates of center of dam crest or point along dam crest for diked dams):

Longitude (as decimal) _____ (or as _____ Degrees _____ Minutes _____ Seconds)

Latitude (as decimal) _____ (or as _____ Degrees _____ Minutes _____ Seconds)

Note: Longitude or latitude as a decimal equals [(degrees) + (minutes/60) + (seconds/3600)].
Longitude and latitude are input into MSIS as decimal values, with the longitude being negative.



Does the dam have an Emergency Action Plan (EAP)? YES ____ NO ____

HAZARD POTENTIAL CLASSIFICATION: The hazard potential classification depends solely on the consequences of failure of the dam and not on the condition of the dam. Check with the mine operator for what classification has been assigned to the dam. If one has been assigned, determine whether it appears reasonable - classifications can change as downstream conditions change. If it appears reasonable, indicate the classification on this form below. If it does not appear reasonable, or no classification has been assigned, then judge the appropriate hazard potential classification and indicate it below. For uncertain cases, the District Dam Safety Representative can be consulted or further assistance can be requested from Technical Support.)

_____ High: Dams, regardless of their condition or size, whose failure will probably cause loss of life.

____ Significant: Dams, regardless of their condition or size, whose failure would result in no probable loss of life but would disrupt important utilities or cause significant economic loss or significant environmental damage.

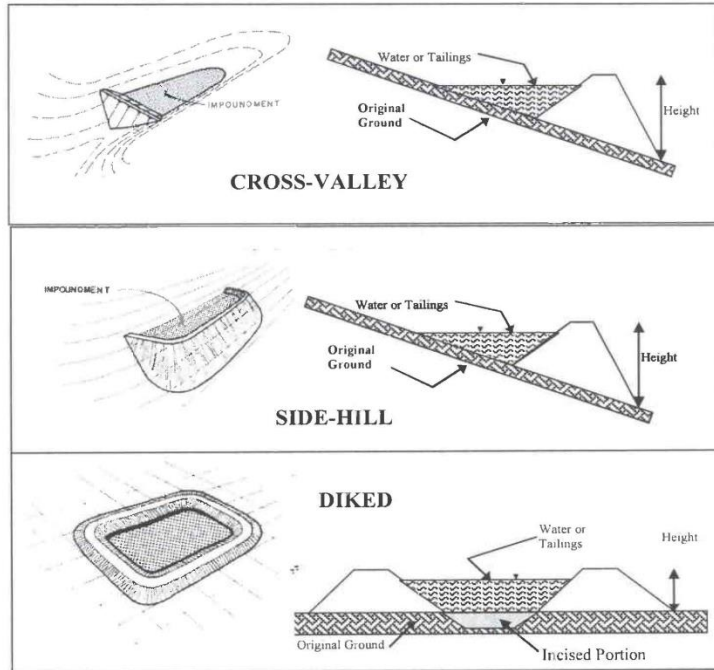
_____ Low: Dams whose failure would result in no probable loss of life and only slight property damage such as to farm buildings, forest or agricultural land, or minor roads.

DESCRIBE REASONING FOR HAZARD RATING INDICATED:

[illegible]



CONFIGURATION:



Cross-Valley _____ Side-Hill _____ Diked _____

Note that any portion of an impoundment that is "incised," meaning it is excavated below undisturbed natural ground such that release of that portion of the impoundment is precluded, should not be considered in the storage capacity or in the dam height reported on this form.

Type of dam construction: _____ upstream _____ downstream _____ centerline

Dam Height (above downstream toe): _____ feet Dam Crest Length: _____ feet

Reservoir Area: Width _____ feet Length _____ feet or _____ Acres ($W \times L / 43560$)

Current Freeboard: _____ feet Drainage Area: _____ square miles

Normal Storage Capacity: _____ acre-feet Maximum Storage Capacity: _____ acre-feet



TYPE OF OUTLET: (Mark all that apply)

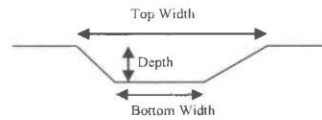
Open Channel Spillway:

Yes _____ No _____

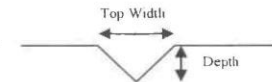
- _____ Trapezoidal
_____ Triangular
_____ Rectangular
_____ Irregular

- _____ Channel Depth
_____ Bottom (or average) width
_____ Top width

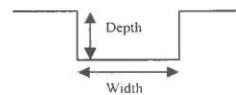
TRAPEZOIDAL



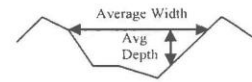
TRIANGULAR



RECTANGULAR

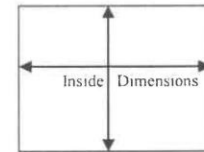
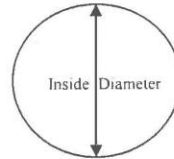


IRREGULAR



Decant Conduit: Yes _____ No _____

Size of conduit: Inside diameter: _____ inches
or Width: _____ inches x Height: _____ inches



Conduit Material

- _____ corrugated metal
_____ welded steel
_____ concrete
_____ plastic (HDPE, PVC, etc.)
_____ other (specify) _____

Is water flowing through the decant? Yes _____ No _____

Other Type of Outlet (specify, e.g. floating pump system) _____

Has the dam been totally removed or breached or has the impoundment been filled in so that the impounding capability has been eliminated? Yes _____ No _____
If "Yes," as of what date? _____

Water, Sediment, or Tailings Dam Inspection Checklist Form

US Department of Labor
Mine Safety & Health Administration



Site Name:	Date:
Mine Name:	Operator's Name:
Mine I.D.:	Hazard Potential Classification: High Significant Low
Inspector's Name:	

Check the appropriate box below. Provide comments when appropriate. If not applicable or not available, record "N/A". Any unusual conditions or construction practices that should be brought to the attention of the field office supervisor or the district dam safety representative should be noted in the comments section. For large diked embankments, separate checklists may be used for different embankment areas. If separate forms are used, identify approximate area that the form applies to in comments.

	Yes	No		Yes	No
1. Frequency of Company's Dam Inspections?			18. Sloughing or bulging on slopes?		
2. Pool elevation (operator records)?			19. Major erosion or slope deterioration?		
3. Decant inlet elevation (operator records)?			20. Decant Pipes:		
4. Open channel spillway elevation (operator records)?			Is water entering inlet, but not exiting outlet?		
5. Lowest dam crest elevation (operator records)?			Is water exiting outlet, but not entering inlet?		
6. If instrumentation is present, are readings recorded (operator records)?			Is water exiting outlet flowing clear?		
7. Is the embankment currently under construction?			21. Seepage (specify location, if seepage carries fines, and approximate seepage rate below):		
8. Foundation preparation (remove vegetation, stumps, topsoil in area where embankment fill will be placed)?			From underdrain?		
9. Trees growing on embankment? (If so, indicate largest diameter below)			At isolated points on embankment slopes?		
10. Cracks or scarps on crest?			At natural hillside in the embankment area?		
11. Is there significant settlement along the crest?			Over widespread areas?		
12. Are decant trashracks clear and in place?			From downstream foundation area?		
13. Depressions or sinkholes in tailings surface or whirlpool in the pool area?			"Boils" beneath stream or ponded water?		
14. Clogged spillways, groin or diversion ditches?			Around the outside of the decant pipe?		
15. Are spillway or ditch linings deteriorated?			22. Surface movements in valley bottom or on hillside?		
16. Are outlets of decant or underdrains blocked?			23. Water against downstream toe?		
17. Cracks or scarps on slopes?			24. Were Photos taken during the dam inspection?		

Major adverse changes in these items could cause instability and should be reported to the District Manager for further evaluation. Adverse conditions noted in these items should normally be described (extent, location, volume, etc.) in the space below and on the back of this sheet.

Inspection Issue #	Comments

MSHA FORM 4000-127a June 2008

October 2009 (Release 2)